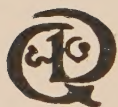


RUNAWAYS AND CASTAWAYS



Runaways and Castaways



1908.

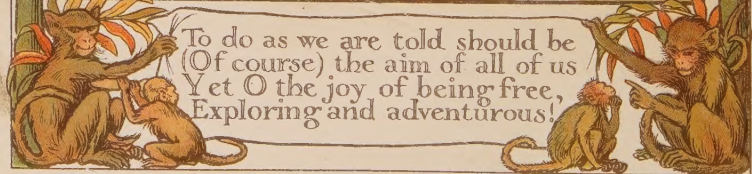


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To do as we are told should be
(Of course) the aim of all of us
Yet O the joy of being free,
Exploring and adventurous!





RUNAWAYS and CASTAWAYS

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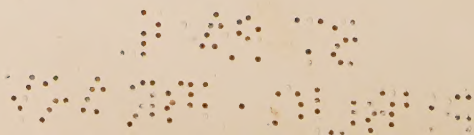
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CHILDREN'S ROOM
J. FICTION
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THE patron saint or sprite of this volume should, of course, be Peter Pan, who holds the record as a runaway by performing the feat on the day he was born. His adventures should have first place ; but since they are told not in a book, but a play, we cannot have them here. Peter Pan's story will not come to us, and we must therefore go to it, as, in fact, everyone who can does—some persons quite old and grey, and even bald, as many as twenty times every Christmas holidays, and wave their handkerchiefs, too.

In default of Peter Pan on the threshold, I have placed there the story of Boldheart, who commenced pirate at the early age of nine, as written down by Lieutenant-Colonel Robin Redforth (of the same age), and presented to the world in the year 1868 by Charles Dickens. This story, which forms the third part of a complete and, as Wendy would say, frightfully fascinating work entitled 'Holiday Romance,' is perhaps less known than anything that the great man ever wrote, and I consider myself very fortunate in having persuaded Messrs. Chapman and Hall to allow me to include it in this volume.

'Holiday Romance' purports to be the joint work of four children : William Tinkling, aged eight ; Nettie Ashford, aged six and a half ; Lieutenant-Colonel Robin Redforth, aged nine ; and Alice Rainbird, aged seven. William Tinkling was the editor of the work. In his own words, 'Bob Redforth

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(he's my cousin, and he's shaking the table on purpose) wanted to be the editor of it ; but I said he shouldn't, because he couldn't. *He* has no idea of being an editor.' Nettie Ashford had become Mrs. Tinkling, and Alice Rainbird had become Mrs. Redforth. Again quoting the editor's narrative :

' Nettie Ashford is my bride. We were married in the right-hand closet in the corner of the dancing-school, where first we met, with a ring (a green one) from Wilkingwater's toy-shop. *I* owed for it out of my pocket-money. When the rapturous ceremony was over, we all four went up the lane and let off a cannon (brought loaded in Bob Redforth's waistcoat-pocket) to announce our nuptials. It flew right up when it went off, and turned over. Next day, Lieutenant-Colonel Robin Redforth was united, with similar ceremonies, to Alice Rainbird. This time the cannon burst with a most terrific explosion, and made a puppy bark.

' My peerless bride was, at the period of which we now treat, in captivity at Miss Grimmer's. Drowvey and Grimmer is the partnership, and opinion is divided which is the greatest beast. The lovely bride of the Colonel was also immured in the dungeons of the same establishment. A vow was entered into, between the Colonel and myself, that we would cut them out on the following Wednesday when walking two and two.

' Under the desperate circumstances of the case, the active brain of the Colonel, combining with his lawless pursuit (he is a pirate), suggested an attack with fireworks. This, however, from motives of humanity, was abandoned as too expensive.'

The four stories were written with a purpose. The plan of the two husbands to rescue their brides failing, it was agreed that they should all take to literature to convince their elders of the proper course to take. In Alice's words : ' Let us in these next holidays, now going to begin, throw our thoughts into something educational for the grown-up people, hinting to them how things ought to be. Let us veil our meaning under a mask of romance—you, I, and Nettie. William Tinkling, being the plainest and quickest writer, shall copy out.'

The only story concerned with running away is that which I give in full—Lieutenant-Colonel Redforth's. Alice Rainbird's is a fairy-tale about a magic fish-bone which would grant one wish and one alone, and that only on the condition that



And she held a cold iron
to his poor dear eye

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it was expressed at the right time. The fish-bone belonged to the Princess Alicia, who had the responsibility of seventeen young brothers and sisters and the baby all on her own tender shoulders. Here is a passage describing her cares and worries, and her cleverness with them, and also telling how the fish-bone was at last used :

‘ Another time the baby fell under the grate. The seventeen young princes and princesses were used to it ; for they were almost always falling under the grate or down the stairs ; but the baby was not used to it yet, and it gave him a swelled face and a black eye. The way the poor little darling came to tumble was, that he was out of the Princess Alicia’s lap just as she was sitting, in a great coarse apron that quite smothered her, in front of the kitchen fire, beginning to peel the turnips for the broth for dinner ; and the way she came to be doing that was, that the King’s cook had run away that morning with her own true love, who was a very tall but very tipsy soldier. Then the seventeen young princes and princesses, who cried at everything that happened, cried and roared. But the Princess Alicia (who couldn’t help crying a little herself) quietly called to them to be still, on account of not throwing back the Queen upstairs, who was fast getting well, and said : “ Hold your tongues, you wicked little monkeys, every one of you, while I examine baby ! ” Then she examined baby, and found that he hadn’t broken anything ; and she held a cold iron to his poor dear eye, and smoothed his poor dear face, and he presently fell asleep in her arms. Then she said to the seventeen princes and princesses : “ I am afraid to let him down yet, lest he should wake and feel pain ; be good, and you shall all be cooks.” They jumped for joy when they heard that, and began making themselves cooks’ caps out of old newspapers. So to one she gave the salt-box, and to one she gave the barley, and to one she gave the herbs, and to one she gave the turnips, and to one she gave the carrots, and to one she gave the onions, and to one she gave the spice-box, till they were all cooks, and all running about at work, she sitting in the middle, smothered in the great coarse apron, nursing baby. By-and-by the broth was done ; and the baby woke up, smiling like an angel, and was trusted to the sedatest princess to hold, while the other princes and princesses were squeezed into a far-off corner to look at the Princess Alicia turning out the saucepanful of broth, for fear (as they were always getting into trouble) they should get splashed and scalded. When the broth came tumbling out, steaming beautifully, and smelling like a nosegay good to eat, they clapped their hands. That made the baby clap his hands ; and that, and his looking as if he had a comic toothache, made all the princes and princesses laugh. So the Princess Alicia said : “ Laugh and be good ; and

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after dinner we will make him a nest on the floor in a corner, and he shall sit in his nest and see a dance of eighteen cooks." That delighted the young princes and princesses, and they ate up all the broth, and washed up all the plates and dishes, and cleared away, and pushed the table into a corner ; and then they in their cooks' caps, and the Princess Alicia in the smothering coarse apron that belonged to the cook that had run away with her own true love that was the very tall but very tipsy soldier, danced a dance of eighteen cooks before the angelic baby, who forgot his swelled face and his black eye, and crowed with joy.

' And so then, once more the Princess Alicia saw King Watkins the First, her father, standing in the doorway looking on, and he said : " What have you been doing, Alicia ? "

" " Cooking and contriving, papa."

" " What else have you been doing, Alicia ? "

" " Keeping the children light-hearted, papa."

" " Where is the magic fish-bone, Alicia ? "

" " In my pocket, papa."

" " I thought you had lost it ? "

" " Oh no, papa ! "

" " Or forgotten it ? "

" " No, indeed, papa."

' The King then sighed so heavily, and seemed so low-spirited, and sat down so miserably, leaning his head upon his hand, and his elbow upon the kitchen-table pushed away in the corner, that the seventeen princes and princesses crept softly out of the kitchen, and left him alone with the Princess Alicia and the angelic baby.

" " What is the matter, papa ? "

" " I am dreadfully poor, my child."

" " Have you no money at all, papa ? "

" " None, my child."

" " Is there no way of getting any, papa ? "

" " No way," said the King. " I have tried very hard, and I have tried all ways."

' When she heard those last words, the Princess Alicia began to put her hand into her pocket where she kept the magic fish-bone.

" " Papa," said she, " when we have tried very hard, and tried all ways, we must have done our very, very best ? "

" " No doubt, Alicia."

" " When we have done our very, very best, papa, and that is not enough, then I think the right time must have come for asking help of others." This was the very secret connected with the magic fish-bone, which she had found out for herself from the good Fairy Grand-marina's words, and which she had so often whispered to her beautiful and fashionable friend, the Duchess.

' So she took out of her pocket the magic fish-bone, that had been

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dried and rubbed and polished till it shone like mother-of-pearl ; and she gave it one little kiss, and wished it was quarter-day. And immediately it *was* quarter-day, and the King's quarter's salary came rattling down the chimney, and bounced into the middle of the floor.'

Nettie Ashford's story was a satirical description of English life. The most memorable thing in it is a remark by Mr. Orange: 'It's a poor heart that never rejoices. Jane, go down to the cellar and fetch a bottle of the upest ginger-beer.'

Robin Redforth's story comes first in our book with peculiar appropriateness, since in its second paragraph it explains why so many boys have run away, are running away, and will run away, and thus gives the keynote to the work. 'It seems that our hero, considering himself spited by a Latin-grammar master . . . privately withdrew his haughty spirit from such low company . . . and entered on a career of valour.' It is not the first time, and it will not be the last, that the skull and cross-bones has been recruited from school. A critic, some-one once said—and you will understand this better in years to come—is a fellow who has failed in literature. Similarly, how often are the best pirates those who cut the worst figure in the class-room !

The story of Tom's adventures is, of course, from Kingsley's *Water Babies*. I include it here not only because it does what we want in the present collection, but also as an appetizer to force you to go on at once to devour that enchanting book. Several persons to whom I have mentioned this inclusion of Tom's adventures have remarked that they wondered I should put in anything so well known. But it is a question whether the inside of *Water Babies* is half so well known as its name. We get into the way of taking the classical stories for granted, just as a schoolboy collecting butterflies continues to neglect the common or garden white, thinking he can add that at any time, and often never gets it at all. I know several children at this moment who, if you asked them, 'Have you got *Water Babies*?' would say, 'Yes.' But if you asked them, 'Have you read *Water Babies*?' would have to say 'No.' But no

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child who is taken as far in the story as our extract takes him could possibly refrain from finishing it in the book, especially in the edition with Mr. Linley Sambourne's exquisite drawings : the best drawings to a children's story, in my opinion, after Sir John Tenniel's to the *Alices*.

Probably no class of boy, not even schoolboys, have run away in greater number, comparatively, than the little sweeps did. Boys in England no longer climb up the chimneys with a brush to scrape out the soot : modern builders, indeed, do not make their chimneys big enough, while the old practice is now also forbidden by law. Yet a hundred years ago the climbing-boy was the regular chimney-cleaner in large houses all over the country, until some kind-hearted persons, led by the poet James Montgomery, realizing how cruel the custom was, succeeded in getting it stopped. Before, however, there was any talk of the law stepping in, the climbing-boy had had many friends, among them Mrs. Montagu, the friend also of Dr. Johnson and Horace Walpole, who used to give the London sweeps a feast of roast beef and plum-pudding on the morning of every May Day, the sweeps' festival, before her house in Portman Square. (That was a hundred and more years ago, but the house still stands—No. 22—and you may go there and imagine the scene.)

One reason for Mrs. Montagu's interest in chimney-sweeps is said to have been the sufferings of Edward Wortley Montagu, a relation of her husband's, when he became himself a climbing-boy on running away from school. But it may equally well have been natural benevolence, as it was in the case of Charles Lamb's friend James White, who gave a supper to London sweeps during Bartholomew Fair every year. The description of one of these suppers, and of Jem White's humorous way with his sooty guests, you must read for yourselves in the *Essays of Elia*, but here is a passage from it :

' O it was a pleasure to see the sable youngers lick in the unctuous meat, with *his* more unctuous sayings—how he would fit the tit-bits to the puny mouths, reserving the lengthier links for the seniors—

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how he would intercept a morsel even in the jaws of some young desperado, declaring it "must to the pan again to be browned, for it was not fit for a gentleman's eating"—how he would recommend this slice of white bread, or that piece of kissing-crust, to a tender juvenile, advising them all to have a care of cracking their teeth, which were their best patrimony—how genteelly he would deal about the small ale, as if it were wine, naming the brewer, and protesting, if it were not good, he should lose their custom; with a special recommendation to wipe the lip before drinking. Then we had our toasts—"the King"—"the Cloth"—which, whether they understood or not, was equally diverting and flattering; and for a crowning sentiment, which never failed, "May the Brush supersede the Laurel!"

Charles Lamb himself took a hand on these occasions, and it was he who advised all his readers to give climbing-boys a penny, twopence, or even a tester (as I am sure he himself did), whenever they met one in the street.

In the same essay there is an account of the adventures of a climbing-boy very like our Tom, who once wandered down the wrong chimney, and so into the wrong room:

'In one of the state beds at Arundel Castle a few years since—under a ducal canopy—(that seat of the Howards is an object of curiosity to visitors, chiefly for its beds, in which the late Duke was especially a connoisseur)—encircled with curtains of delicatest crimson, with starry coronets inwoven—folded between a pair of sheets whiter and softer than the lap where Venus lulled Ascanius—was discovered by chance, after all methods of search had failed, at noonday, fast asleep, a lost chimney-sweeper. The little creature, having somehow confounded his passage among the intricacies of those lordly chimneys, by some unknown aperture had alighted upon this magnificent chamber; and, tired with his tedious explorations, was unable to resist the delicious invitement to repose, which he there saw exhibited; so, creeping between the sheets very quietly, laid his black head upon the pillow, and slept like a young Howard.'

Lamb goes on to suggest that the reason the little boy dared to get into such a magnificent bed was that he was by birth a young nobleman, once accustomed to these luxuries, who had been kidnapped by a master-sweep and made into a climbing-boy. This fate for especially compact little boys was, if not common in fact, common in fiction, just as kidnapping by gipsies is in more modern stories (the gipsy con-

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triving by walnut-juice what the master-sweep relied on soot to effect). As an example, I may quote the following story from a little book published about 1820 :

' THE LITTLE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER.

' I saw a child sitting upon the grate, whilst its master, with a whip in one hand and a candle in the other, was vowing either to cut him in pieces or set him on fire unless he climbed the chimney.

' Bursting into tears, the boy exclaimed : " Oh, sir, take me to my mamma, and never let me go with that nasty man again !"

" " God bless your honour," said the man in evident confusion, " he means his nurse at the workhouse."

' I pulled the bell, and ordered my servant to take care the fellow did not escape, when he flew to the window, jumped out, and was out of sight in a moment.

" " Who is your mamma ?"

" " My mamma's name is Melville, and she lives at a great white house near Windsor."

' I sent immediately to a tailor's, and the little chimney-sweeper was soon converted into a gentleman.

' I sent my servant in advance, and ordered my carriage to follow.

' At length we reached the avenue, and saw a lady in deep mourning.

" " Oh, my dear, dear mamma !" exclaimed the child, and in no less than a minute the happy parent pressed her boy to her bosom.

' The happy, weeping servants came crowding round the child, who asked for Molly, his nursemaid.

" " She is gone home, my darling," said Mrs. Melville, " for I could not bear the sight of so careless a person."

" " Indeed, it was not Molly's fault. My cousin George went one way and I another, and so she could not catch us both ; and just as I got outside the park gates that nasty man caught me up in his arms, and said, ' Ah, ha ! have I got you, my young master ?' and never stopped until he came to an old tumble-down house, where he made me take off my nice blue jacket, and put on a nasty sooty coat. Look at my shoulder, mamma," continued he, drawing out his little arm as far as he could.

' Mrs. Melville shrieked when she beheld the results of the barbarian's inhumanity, and besought me to find out the wretch ; but as little Edward could give no account of the place where he had been secreted, all our attempts were in vain.'

Tom, however, as we shall see, reversed all this. Tom began by being a dirty little climbing-boy, and, running away, became something as different as could be imagined. Charles

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Kingsley came, of course, too late to be the friend of the climbing-boy that he would have loved to have been—for he was always twitching to set wrong things right: he merely used Tom and his troubles to make the greatest contrast possible between a human being and a water-baby.

Whether or not Tom was the generic name for a climbing-boy—as Tommy is for a soldier and Chips is for a carpenter at sea—I do not know; but William Blake, in his ‘Chimney-Sweeper’s Song,’ written long before Lamb’s essay, and far longer, of course, before Kingsley’s story, calls him Tom, too:

‘THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER.

- “ When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry, ‘ Weep ! weep ! weep ! weep !’
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.
- “ There’s little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curled like a lamb’s back, was shaved ; so I said :
‘ Hush, Tom ! never mind it, for, when your head’s bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.’
- “ And so he was quiet, and that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight !—
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.
- “ And by came an angel, who had a bright key,
And he opened the coffins and set them all free ;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing, they run,
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.
- “ Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind ;
And the angel told Tom, if he’d be a good boy,
He’d have God for his Father, and never want joy.
- “ And so Tom awoke, and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm :
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.”’

It will be seen that among the stories of runaways and castaways in this volume all treat of boys, with the exception of the account of Maggie Tulliver’s expedition to the gipsies, and

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the last, and the sad little history we are now coming to—‘A Farewell Appearance,’ which Mr. Anstey and his publishers, Messrs. Longman, kindly allow me to reprint from *The Black Poodle* volume. It would be difficult to describe more movingly than Mr. Anstey’s sympathetic pen has done the woes that attend upon a little wilful dog when it takes the law into its own paws.

It was the boots at the Holly-Tree Inn who told the story of Master Harry Walmers, junior, which comes next. Neither Harry nor Norah could very well be left out of any collection of runaways, even if some of you think that the reason of their running away was insufficient or a little bit absurd. The way the boots tells it puts that all right. Dickens was always at his happiest with hotel servants. David Copperfield’s waiter (whom we are soon to meet) could not be better, and Sam Weller in *Pickwick* was a boots, too.

The next story, the longest in the book, ‘Little Robinson of Paris,’ was a great favourite of mine when I was your age. I use the translation made by Lucy Landon fifty and more years ago, and I have shortened it a good deal, without, however, losing any story. I hope you may like it as much as I used to; but I fear not, for it is a shade too simple for this latter day. It also suffers a little from a complaint which might be called Robinsonia—that is to say, things occur rather too pat. Just as the Swiss Family Robinson, when in need of the necessities or even luxuries of life, always found them growing on the next tree, so does Cecil, the French Robinson, fall naturally upon velvet. It is true that his heart was so golden that he deserved his fortune, but none the less a little more adversity would not have hurt the book either as a story or as a transcript from life. It may be objected, also, that Fox was a shade too clever. None the less, it has given me immense pleasure to read this pretty story again, and I feel sure that among the readers of this book there will be enough old-fashioned minds to justify its presence here.

Maggie Tulliver is in a book by George Eliot called *The Mill*

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on the Floss, which you will probably one day read. I do not consider that her adventures make a satisfactory gipsy-tale, for the gipsies produced no walnut-juice and made no effort to run off with her ; but it is the best I could find, and is certainly very admirably and movingly told. It is also the only story of a girl runaway or castaway that I have found that I like well enough to use. Others I have read—*Leila on the Island*, for example—but they have not been direct enough, or have had other faults.

Of David Copperfield's famous walk to Dover there is no need for me to say anything, except that I hope that everyone who reads it will feel it necessary one day later to read the whole story, which is not only the best novel by Charles Dickens, but in many ways the best novel by anyone. I might have continued the extract to include a fuller account of David's aunt Betsy Trotwood, and her fury with the donkey-boys, and her strange friend Mr. Dick, who was allowed to rattle a little money but not to spend it, and many other pleasant things ; but, great as was the temptation, my strength of mind was greater, and I broke off where I did.

But here I will quote the account of an earlier adventure of this same little David, when a year or so younger, on his journey from Norfolk to London. News had been sent on to the landlady of the inn where the coach started that a meal was to be prepared for the boy. When the carrier's cart deposited him there the landlady called to the waiter to show the way to the coffee-room. David now takes up the story :

' It was a large, long room with some large maps in it. I doubt if I could have felt much stranger if the maps had been real foreign countries, and I cast away in the middle of them. I felt it was taking a liberty to sit down, with my cap in my hand, on the corner of the chair nearest the door ; and when the waiter laid a cloth on purpose for me, and put a set of castors on it, I think I must have turned red all over with modesty.

' He brought me some chops, and vegetables, and took the covers off in such a bouncing manner that I was afraid I must have given

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him some offence. But he greatly relieved my mind by putting a chair for me at the table, and saying, very affably, "Now, six-foot! come on!"

'I thanked him, and took my seat at the board: but found it extremely difficult to handle my knife and fork with anything like dexterity, or to avoid splashing myself with the gravy, while he was standing opposite, staring so hard, and making me blush in the most dreadful manner every time I caught his eye. After watching me into the second chop, he said—

"There's half a pint of ale for you. Will you have it now?"

'I thanked him, and said "Yes." Upon which he poured it out of a jug into a large tumbler, and held it up against the light, and made it look beautiful.

"My eye!" he said. "It seems a good deal, don't it?"

"It does seem a good deal," I answered with a smile. For it was quite delightful to me, to find him so pleasant. He was a twinkling-eyed, pimple-faced man, with his hair standing upright all over his head; and as he stood with one arm akimbo, holding up the glass to the light with the other hand, he looked quite friendly.

"There was a gentleman here, yesterday," he said, "a stout gentleman, by the name of Topsawyer—perhaps you know him?"

"No," I said, "I don't think——"

"In breeches and gaiters, broad-brimmed hat, grey coat, speckled choker," said the waiter.

"No," I said bashfully, "I haven't the pleasure——"

"He came in here," said the waiter, looking at the light through the tumbler; "ordered a glass of this ale—*would* order it—I told him not—drank it, and fell dead. It was too old for him. It oughtn't to be drawn; that's the fact."

'I was very much shocked to hear of this melancholy accident, and said I thought I had better have some water.

"Why, you see," said the waiter, still looking at the light through the tumbler, with one of his eyes shut up, "our people don't like things being ordered and left. It offends 'em. But I'll drink it, if you like. I'm used to it, and use is everything. I don't think it'll hurt me, if I throw my head back, and take it off quick. Shall I?"

'I replied that he would much oblige me by drinking it, if he thought he could do it safely, but by no means otherwise. When he did throw his head back, and take it off quick, I had a horrible fear, I confess, of seeing him meet the fate of the lamented Mr. Topsawyer, and fall lifeless on the carpet. But it didn't hurt him. On the contrary, I thought he seemed the fresher for it.

"What have we got here?" he said, putting a fork into my dish. "Not chops?"

"Chops," I said.

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"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed, "I didn't know they were chops. Why, a chop's the very thing to take off the bad effects of that beer! Ain't it lucky?"

So he took a chop by the bone in one hand, and a potato in the other, and ate away with a very good appetite, to my extreme satisfaction. He afterwards took another chop, and another potato; and after that, another chop and another potato. When we had done, he brought me a pudding, and having set it before me, seemed to ruminate, and to become absent in his mind for some moments.

"How's the pie?" he said, rousing himself.

"It's a pudding," I made answer.

"Pudding!" he exclaimed. "Why, bless me, so it is! What!" looking at it nearer. "You don't mean to say it's a batter-pudding!"

"Yes, it is indeed."

"Why, a batter-pudding," he said, taking up a tablespoon, "is my favourite pudding! Ain't that lucky? Come on, little un, and let's see who'll get most."

The waiter certainly got most. He entreated me more than once to come in and win, but what with his tablespoon to my teaspoon, his dispatch to my dispatch, and his appetite to my appetite, I was left far behind at the first mouthful, and had no chance with him. I never saw anyone enjoy a pudding so much, I think; and he laughed, when it was all gone, as if his enjoyment of it lasted still.

Finding him so very friendly and companionable, it was then that I asked for the pen and ink and paper, to write to Peggotty. He not only brought it immediately, but was good enough to look over me while I wrote the letter. When I had finished it, he asked me where I was going to school.

"I said, 'Near London,' which was all I knew.

"Oh, my eye!" he said, looking very low-spirited, "I am sorry for that."

"Why?" I asked him.

"Oh dear!" he said, shaking his head, "that's the school where they broke the boy's ribs—two ribs—a little boy he was. I should say he was—let me see—how old are you, about?"

"I told him between eight and nine.

"That's just his age," he said. "He was eight years and six months old when they broke his first rib; eight years and eight months old when they broke his second, and did for him."

I could not disguise from myself, or from the waiter, that this was an uncomfortable coincidence, and inquired how it was done. His answer was not cheering to my spirits, for it consisted of two dismal words, "With whopping."

The blowing of the coach-horn in the yard was a seasonable diversion, which made me get up and hesitatingly inquire, in the mingled

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pride and diffidence of having a purse (which I took out of my pocket), if there were anything to pay.

"There's a sheet of letter-paper," he returned. "Did you ever buy a sheet of letter-paper?"

"I could not remember that I ever had.

"It's dear," he said, "on account of the duty. Threepence. That's the way we're taxed in this country. There's nothing else, except the waiter. Never mind the ink. I lose by that."

"What should you—what should I—how much ought I to—what would it be right to pay the waiter, if you please?" I stammered, blushing.

"If I hadn't a family, and that family hadn't the cowpock," said the waiter, "I wouldn't take a sixpence. If I didn't support a aged pairint, and a lovely sister"—here the waiter was greatly agitated—"I wouldn't take a farthing. If I had a good place, and was treated well here, I should beg acceptance of a trifle, instead of taking it. But I live on broken wittles—and I sleep on the coals"—here the waiter burst into tears.

"I was very much concerned for his misfortunes, and felt that any recognition short of ninepence would be mere brutality and hardness of heart. Therefore I gave him one of my three bright shillings, which he received with much humility and veneration, and spun up with his thumb, directly afterwards, to try the goodness of.

"It was a little disconcerting to me, to find, when I was being helped up behind the coach, that I was supposed to have eaten all the dinner without any assistance. I discovered this from overhearing the lady in the bow-window say to the guard, "Take care of that child, George, or he'll burst!"

The next story is an extract from Mrs. Ewing's "Great Emergency," which Mrs. Eden kindly allows me to print here. Mrs. Ewing, I fear, is not read as much as she was; which shows how very foolish people can be, for she has never had a superior as a writer for children, and probably never will have. Her books should be in every home where there are children.

After a great English novelist a great Frenchman. The little Alexandre of the next story grew up into the great Alexandre—Alexandre Dumas, the author of *The Three Musketeers* and *Monte Cristo* and other of the best stories in the world. Some day you will surely read them and read them again. And you will be wise if you read Dumas's *Memoirs*, too, from

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which, by the kind permission of Messrs. Methuen, the English publishers, I have taken this episode. They are in six fat volumes, and one wishes there were sixty.

'The Surprising Adventures of Master Charles Summerton' is one of Bret Harte's early sketches. The English counterpart to it is the episode entitled 'The Magic Ring' in Mr. Kenneth Grahame's *Golden Age*, where Harold disappears mysteriously and also finds his way to a circus. Running away requires no better motive. I wish I could have included Mr. Grahame's story, too; but you must seek that for yourselves, with much more delightful matter, in *The Golden Age* and *Dream Days*. The question whether boys were made for circuses or circuses for boys has never been decided; but they are now mutually dependent, so much so that it is conjectured by our best scientific men that if a travelling circus were suddenly to encamp in a hitherto totally uninhabited country, or upon a thoroughly deserted island, and begin to erect its tent, a sufficient number of boys would be spontaneously forthcoming to look on and hinder and creep under the canvas.

An experience of a friend of my own tends to support this interesting theory. Being one hot summer day in Croydon, he tells me, he gathered from the pictures on the hoardings that the town was being visited by the circus of Lord George Sanger (surely one of the kindest of noblemen, with the most sensible of hobbies), and walking idly down a main street, he was suddenly conscious in the hazy distance of brass music, and high among the housetops of a glint of gold, which by degrees he made out to proceed from the gleaming helmet of some aerial goddess. As it came nearer he perceived that the triumphal car of Britannia was creaking and swaying towards him. He stood reverently in a doorway to let the whole wonderful procession pass, and then joined the crowd in its wake.

So marching (he said), we came to the field of the cloth of canvas. I would not go in the tent, having an absurd engage-

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ment to keep, but I walked round the wild beasts' cages, and was coming out, when I saw a knot of a dozen ragged little Croydon boys looking wistfully at the pay-box, a notice above which stated that the admission to the cheapest seats was threepence. On a sudden impulse I gave the man behind the pigeon-hole half a crown, and told him it was to pay for ten of the boys, and then, fearing the worst, I rapidly moved away. But I was not quick enough. From nowhere and from everywhere—from the sky itself, from the centre of the earth, from the circumambient air—were materialized more and more boys, all ragged and importunate, and all looking alternatively from me to the circus-tent and from the circus-tent to me with eyes that yearned as no dying collie's could, and lips tremulous with longing and fear of disappointment. To tell them that I was not made of half-crowns, or even of threepenny-pieces, was as much to the point as to read the Riot Act to a pack of wolves, and I literally took to my heels and never relaxed until I was in the saloon bar of a neighbouring hotel, breathless and exhausted, and the potman was endeavouring to disperse the crowd. Half an hour later I crept away by another door.

Like Charles Summerton, Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer's partner in adventure, had his own way of entering the circus. He 'dived in under the tent.' He adds: 'You can't be too careful. I ain't opposed to spending money on circuses when there ain't no other way, but there ain't no use in *wasting* it on them.'

And this brings us to the next story, in which we meet Huckleberry Finn again, taking to the woods with Tom Sawyer and Joe Harper. This episode I extract, by kind permission of Messrs. Chatto and Windus, from Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer*, which is in some ways the best book about a boy that has been written, and which you should at once read, if only to pave the way for that greater work, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. *Tom Sawyer* was published as long ago as 1876, but although many authors have since



Never relaxed until I was in the Sa-
-loon bar of a neighbouring Hotel

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attempted to describe the mind and actions of a high-spirited, careless boy, few have done it as truthfully and none with such humour and freshness. *Huckleberry Finn*, which is in a way *Tom Sawyer's* sequel, is a book for older readers ; but even at the risk of not appreciating everything in it, you should read it if you get the chance.

The original Tom Sawyer of Mark Twain's story was stated in the papers three or four years ago to have reached the age of seventy-six, and to be still hearty. Mark Twain will be seventy-three this November. Long may he prosper !

Finally, we come to one more story of an animal runaway—this time not a dog, but a bear —Bret Harte's delightful ' Baby Sylvester,' a creature who naturally pairs off in my mind with Mr. Kipling's ' Moti Guj, Mutineer,' the out-of-hand elephant. And with ' Baby Sylvester ' this collection of runaway and castaway stories comes to a close.

Most of us, I suppose, in seasons of unhappiness have thought that we would run away, and many of us have tried it and have come back again. Only with the young is it possible, for they run not from their uncomfortable selves, as the old vainly try to do, but from uncomfortable conditions. Running away, however, with any success is no longer easy, for what with newspapers and motor-cars, the marconigraph, the telegraph, and the telephone, catching the runaway has become the simplest affair. In the old slow days one had a chance, but now, to the fugitive who wishes to escape capture, whether he be a discontented schoolboy or a thief, the world, once so vast (whether you take it in hemispheres or in Mercator's projection), shrivels to the size of a village. Even false beards seem no longer (if ever) to be made of hair that resembles anything that ever grew on a human face—at least, if I may judge by the article painfully acquired at a wig-maker's by a friend of my own who thought to get to Switzerland unobserved in it.

But if you do decide to run away and take to the woods, where science is less prevalent, you might do worse than pre-

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pare for your great enterprise by reading Lieutenant-General Baden Powell's *Scouting for Boys*, a fascinating work which lies before me. That will give you a thousand useful hints, if it does not dissuade you altogether. But if it does dissuade you, it will at the same time provide you with the best substitute the modern adventurous English boy could have for running away—the game of scouting. It is worth looking into.

E. V. LUCAS.



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Runaways and Castaways

Boldheart



THE subject of our present narrative would appear to have devoted himself to the pirate profession at a comparatively early age. We find him in command of a splendid schooner of one hundred guns, loaded to the muzzle, ere yet he had had a party in honour of his tenth birthday.

It seems that our hero, considering himself spited by a Latin-grammar master, demanded the satisfaction due from one man of honour to another. Not getting it, he privately withdrew his haughty spirit from such low company, bought a second-hand pocket-pistol, folded up some sandwiches in a paper bag, made a bottle of Spanish liquorice-water, and entered on a career of valour.

It were tedious to follow Boldheart (for such was his name) through the commencing stages of his story. Suffice it that we find him bearing the rank of Captain Boldheart, reclining in full uniform on a crimson hearth-rug spread out upon the quarter-deck of his schooner

Boldheart

The Beauty, in the China seas. It was a lovely evening ; and, as his crew lay grouped about him, he favoured them with the following melody :

‘ O landsmen are folly,
O pirates are jolly,
O diddleum Dolly,

Di.

Chorus.—Heave yo.’

The soothing effect of these animated sounds floating over the waters, as the common sailors united their rough voices to take up the rich tones of Boldheart, may be more easily conceived than described.

It was under these circumstances that the look-out at the masthead gave the word, ‘ Whales !’

All was now activity.

‘ Where away ?’ cried Captain Boldheart, starting up.

‘ On the larboard bow, sir,’ replied the fellow at the masthead, touching his hat. For such was the height of discipline on board of *The Beauty*, that, even at that height, he was obliged to mind it, or be shot through the head.

‘ This adventure belongs to me,’ said Boldheart. ‘ Boy, my harpoon. Let no man follow ;’ and leaping alone into his boat, the captain rowed with admirable dexterity in the direction of the monster.

All was now excitement.

‘ He nears him !’ said an elderly seaman, following the captain through his spy-glass.

‘ He strikes him !’ said another seaman, a mere stripling, but also with a spy-glass.

‘ He tows him towards us !’ said another seaman, a man in the full vigour of life, but also with a spy-glass.

In fact, the captain was seen approaching, with a huge bulk following. We will not dwell on the deafening cries

Boldheart

of ' Boldheart ! Boldheart ! ' with which he was received, when, carelessly leaping on the quarter-deck, he presented his prize to his men. They afterwards made two thousand four hundred and seventeen pound ten and sixpence by it.

Ordering the sail to be braced up, the captain now stood W.N.W. *The Beauty* flew rather than floated over the dark blue waters. Nothing particular occurred for a fortnight, except taking, with considerable slaughter, four Spanish galleons and a scow from South America, all richly laden. Inaction began to tell upon the spirits of the men. Captain Boldheart called all hands aft, and said, ' My lads, I hear there are discontented ones among ye. Let any such stand forth.'

After some murmuring, in which the expressions, ' Ay, ay, sir ! ' ' Union Jack,' ' Avast,' ' Starboard,' ' Port,' ' Bowsprit,' and similar indications of a mutinous undercurrent, though subdued, were audible, Bill Boozey, captain of the foretop, came out from the rest. His form was that of a giant, but he quailed under the captain's eye.

' What are your wrongs ? ' said the captain.

' Why, d'ye see, Captain Boldheart,' replied the towering mariner, ' I've sailed, man and boy, for many a year, but I never yet know'd the milk served out for the ship's company's teas to be so sour as 'tis aboard this craft.'

At this moment the thrilling cry, ' Man overboard ! ' announced to the astonished crew that Boozey, in stepping back, as the captain (in mere thoughtfulness) laid his hand upon the faithful pocket-pistol which he wore in his belt, had lost his balance, and was struggling with the foaming tide.

All was now stupefaction.

But with Captain Boldheart, to throw off his uniform coat, regardless of the various rich orders with which it was decorated, and to plunge into the sea after the drown-

Boldheart

ing giant, was the work of a moment. Maddening was the excitement when boats were lowered ; intense the joy when the captain was seen holding up the drowning man with his teeth ; deafening the cheering when both were restored to the main deck of *The Beauty*. And, from the instant of his changing his wet clothes for dry ones, Captain Boldheart had no such devoted though humble friend as William Boozey.

Boldheart now pointed to the horizon, and called the attention of his crew to the taper spars of a ship lying snug in harbour under the guns of a fort.

‘ She shall be ours at sunrise,’ said he. ‘ Serve out a double allowance of grog, and prepare for action.’

All was now preparation.

When morning dawned, after a sleepless night, it was seen that the stranger was crowding on all sail to come out of the harbour and offer battle. As the two ships came nearer to each other, the stranger fired a gun and hoisted Roman colours. Boldheart then perceived her to be the Latin-grammar master’s bark. Such indeed she was, and had been tacking about the world in unavailing pursuit, from the time of his first taking to a roving life.

Boldheart now addressed his men, promising to blow them up if he should feel convinced that their reputation required it, and giving orders that the Latin-grammar master should be taken alive. He then dismissed them to their quarters, and the fight began with a broadside from *The Beauty*. She then veered around, and poured in another. *The Scorpion* (so was the bark of the Latin-grammar master appropriately called) was not slow to return her fire ; and a terrific cannonading ensued, in which the guns of *The Beauty* did tremendous execution.

The Latin-grammar master was seen upon the poop, in the midst of the smoke and fire, encouraging his men. To

Boldheart

do him justice, he was no craven, though his white hat, his short grey trousers, and his long snuff-coloured surtout reaching to his heels (the self-same coat in which he had spited Boldheart), contrasted most unfavourably with the brilliant uniform of the latter. At this moment, Boldheart, seizing a pike and putting himself at the head of his men, gave the word to board.

A desperate conflict ensued in the hammock-nettings — or somewhere in that direction — until the Latin-grammar master, having all his masts gone, his hull and rigging shot through, and seeing Boldheart slashing a path towards him, hauled down his flag himself, gave up his sword to Boldheart, and asked for quarter. Scarce had he been put into the captain's boat, ere *The Scorpion* went down with all on board.

On Captain Boldheart's now assembling his men, a circumstance occurred. He found it necessary with one blow of his cutlass to kill the cook, who, having lost his brother in the late action, was making at the Latin-grammar master in an infuriated state, intent on his destruction with a carving-knife.

Captain Boldheart then turned to the Latin-grammar master, severely reproaching him with his perfidy, and put it to his crew what they considered that a master who spited a boy deserved.

They answered with one voice, 'Death.'

'It may be so,' said the captain; 'but it shall never be said that Boldheart stained his hour of triumph with the blood of his enemy. Prepare the cutter.'

The cutter was immediately prepared.

'Without taking your life,' said the captain, 'I must yet for ever deprive you of the power of spiting other boys. I shall turn you adrift in this boat. You will find in her two oars, a compass, a bottle of rum, a small cask of

Boldheart

water, a piece of pork, a bag of biscuits, and my Latin grammar. Go! and spite the natives, if you can find any.'

Deeply conscious of this bitter sarcasm, the unhappy wretch was put into the cutter, and was soon left far behind. He made no effort to row, but was seen lying on his back with his legs up, when last made out by the ship's telescopes.

A stiff breeze now beginning to blow, Captain Boldheart gave orders to keep her S.S.W., easing her a little during the night by falling off a point or two W. by W., or even by W.S., if she complained much. He then retired for the night, having in truth much need of repose. In addition to the fatigues he had undergone, this brave officer had received sixteen wounds in the engagement, but had not mentioned it.

In the morning a white squall came on, and was succeeded by other squalls of various colours. It thundered and lightened heavily for six weeks. Hurricanes then set in for two months. Waterspouts and tornadoes followed. The oldest sailor on board—and he was a very old one—had never seen such weather. *The Beauty* lost all idea where she was, and the carpenter reported six feet two of water in the hold. Everybody fell senseless at the pumps every day.

Provisions now ran very low. Our hero put the crew on short allowance, and put himself on shorter allowance than any man in the ship. But his spirit kept him fat. In this extremity, the gratitude of Boozey, the captain of the foretop, whom our readers may remember, was truly affecting. The loving though lowly William repeatedly requested to be killed and preserved for the captain's table.

We now approach a change of affairs.

Boldheart.

One day during a gleam of sunshine, and when the weather had moderated, the man at the masthead—too weak now to touch his hat, besides its having been blown away—called out :

‘ Savages !’

All was now expectation.

Presently fifteen hundred canoes, each paddled by twenty savages, were seen advancing in excellent order. They were of a light green colour (the savages were), and sang, with great energy, the following strain :

‘ Choo a choo a choo tooth.

Muntch, muntch. Nicey !

Choo a choo a choo tooth.

Muntch, muntch. Nicey !’

As the shades of night were by this time closing in, these expressions were supposed to embody this simple people’s views of the evening hymn. But it soon appeared that the song was a translation of ‘ For what we are going to receive,’ etc.

The chief, imposingly decorated with feathers of lively colours, and having the majestic appearance of a fighting parrot, no sooner understood (he understood English perfectly) that the ship was *The Beauty*, Captain Boldheart, than he fell upon his face on the deck, and could not be persuaded to rise until the captain had lifted him up, and told him he wouldn’t hurt him. All the rest of the savages also fell on their faces with marks of terror, and had also to be lifted up one by one. Thus the fame of the great Boldheart had gone before him, even among these children of Nature.

Turtles and oysters were now produced in astonishing numbers ; and on these and yams the people made a hearty meal. After dinner the chief told Captain Boldheart that there was better feeding up at the village, and

Boldheart

that he would be glad to take him and his officers there. Apprehensive of treachery, Boldheart ordered his boat's crew to attend him completely armed. And well were it for other commanders if their precautions—but let us not anticipate.

When the canoes arrived at the beach, the darkness of the night was illumined by the light of an immense fire. Ordering his boat's crew (with the intrepid though illiterate William at their head) to keep close and be upon their guard, Boldheart bravely went on, arm-in-arm with the chief.

But how to depict the captain's surprise when he found a ring of savages singing in chorus that barbarous translation of 'For what we are going to receive,' etc., which has been given above, and dancing hand-in-hand round the Latin-grammar master, in a hamper with his head shaved, while two savages floured him before putting him to the fire to be cooked!

Boldheart now took counsel with his officers on the course to be adopted. In the meantime, the miserable captive never ceased begging pardon and imploring to be delivered. On the generous Boldheart's proposal, it was at length resolved that he should not be cooked, but should be allowed to remain raw, on two conditions, namely:

1. That he should never, under any circumstances, presume to teach any boy anything any more.
2. That, if taken back to England, he should pass his life in travelling to find out boys who wanted their exercises done, and should do their exercises for those boys for nothing, and never say a word about it.

Drawing the sword from beneath its sheath, Boldheart swore him to these conditions on its shining blade. The prisoner wept bitterly, and appeared acutely to feel the errors of his past career.



Boldheart

The captain then ordered his boat's crew to make ready for a volley, and after firing to reload quickly. 'And expect a score or two on ye to go head over heels,' murmured William Boozey; 'for I'm a-looking at ye.' With those words, the derisive though deadly William took a good aim.

'Fire!'

The ringing voice of Boldheart was lost in the report of the guns and the screeching of the savages. Volley after volley awakened the numerous echoes. Hundreds of savages were killed, hundreds wounded, and thousands ran howling into the woods. The Latin-grammar master had a spare night-cap lent him, and a long-tail coat, which he wore hind side before. He presented a ludicrous though pitiable appearance, and serve him right.

We now find Captain Boldheart, with this rescued wretch on board, standing off for other islands. At one of these, not a cannibal island, but a pork and vegetable one, he married (only in fun on his part) the king's daughter. Here he rested some time, receiving from the natives great quantities of precious stones, gold dust, elephants' teeth, and sandal wood, and getting very rich. This, too, though he almost every day made presents of enormous value to his men.

The ship being at length as full as she could hold of all sorts of valuable things, Boldheart gave orders to weigh the anchor, and turn *The Beauty's* head towards England. These orders were obeyed with three cheers; and ere the sun went down full many a hornpipe had been danced on deck by the uncouth though agile William.

We next find Captain Boldheart about three leagues off Madeira, surveying through his spy-glass a stranger of suspicious appearance making sail towards him. On his firing a gun ahead of her to bring her to, she ran up a flag,

Boldheart

which he instantly recognized as the flag from the mast in the back-garden at home.

Inferring from this that his father had put to sea to seek his long-lost son, the captain sent his own boat on board the stranger to inquire if this was so, and, if so, whether his father's intentions were strictly honourable. The boat came back with a present of greens and fresh meat, and reported that the stranger was *The Family* of twelve hundred tons, and had not only the captain's father on board, but also his mother, with the majority of his aunts and uncles, and all his cousins. It was further reported to Boldheart that the whole of these relations had expressed themselves in a becoming manner, and were anxious to embrace him and thank him for the glorious credit he had done them. Boldheart at once invited them to breakfast next morning on board *The Beauty*, and gave orders for a brilliant ball that should last all day.

It was in the course of the night that the captain discovered the hopelessness of reclaiming the Latin-grammar master. That thankless traitor was found out, as the two ships lay near each other, communicating with *The Family* by signals, and offering to give up Boldheart. He was hanged at the yard-arm the first thing in the morning, after having it impressively pointed out to him by Boldheart that this was what spitters came to.

The meeting between the captain and his parents was attended with tears. His uncles and aunts would have attended their meeting with tears too, but he wasn't going to stand that. His cousins were very much astonished by the size of his ship and the discipline of his men, and were greatly overcome by the splendour of his uniform. He kindly conducted them round the vessel, and pointed out everything worthy of notice. He also fired his hundred guns, and found it amusing to witness their alarm.

Boldheart

The entertainment surpassed everything ever seen on board ship, and lasted from ten in the morning until seven the next morning. Only one disagreeable incident occurred. Captain Boldheart found himself obliged to put his cousin Tom in irons, for being disrespectful. On the boy's promising amendment, however, he was humanely released after a few hours' close confinement.

Boldheart now took his mother down into the great cabin, and asked after the young lady with whom, it was well known to the world, he was in love. His mother replied that the object of his affections was then at school at Margate, for the benefit of sea-bathing (it was the month of September), but that she feared the young lady's friends were still opposed to the union. Boldheart at once resolved, if necessary, to bombard the town.

Taking the command of his ship with this intention, and putting all but fighting men on board *The Family*, with orders to that vessel to keep in company, Boldheart soon anchored in Margate Roads. Here he went ashore well-armed, and attended by his boat's crew (at their head the faithful though ferocious William), and demanded to see the mayor, who came out of his office.

'Dost know the name of yon ship, mayor?' asked Boldheart fiercely.

'No,' said the mayor, rubbing his eyes, which he could scarce believe, when he saw the goodly vessel riding at anchor.

'She is named *The Beauty*,' said the captain.

'Hah!' exclaimed the mayor, with a start. 'And you, then, are Captain Boldheart?'

'The same.'

A pause ensued. The mayor trembled.

'Now, mayor,' said the captain, 'choose! Help me to my bride, or be bombarded.'

Boldheart

The mayor begged for two hours' grace, in which to make inquiries respecting the young lady. Boldheart accorded him but one ; and during that one placed William Boozey sentry over him, with a drawn sword, and instructions to accompany him wherever he went, and to run him through the body if he showed a sign of playing false.

At the end of the hour the mayor reappeared more dead than alive, closely waited on by Boozey more alive than dead.

' Captain,' said the mayor, ' I have ascertained that the young lady is going to bathe. Even now she waits her turn for a machine. The tide is low, though rising. I, in one of our town-boats, shall not be suspected. When she comes forth in her bathing-dress into the shallow water from behind the hood of the machine, my boat shall intercept her and prevent her return. Do you the rest.'

' Mayor,' returned Captain Boldheart, ' thou hast saved thy town.'

The captain then signalled his boat to take him off, and, steering her himself, ordered her crew to row towards the bathing-ground, and there to rest upon their oars. All happened as had been arranged. His lovely bride came forth, the mayor glided in behind her, she became confused, and had floated out of her depth, when, with one skilful touch of the rudder and one quivering stroke from the boat's crew, her adoring Boldheart held her in his strong arms. There her shrieks of terror were changed to cries of joy.

Before *The Beauty* could get under way, the hoisting of all the flags in the town and harbour, and the ringing of all the bells, announced to the brave Boldheart that he had nothing to fear. He therefore determined to be married on the spot, and signalled for a clergyman and clerk, who came off promptly in a sailing-boat named *The*

Boldheart

Skylark. Another great entertainment was then given on board *The Beauty*, in the midst of which the mayor was called out by a messenger. He returned with the news that Government had sent down to know whether Captain Boldheart, in acknowledgment of the great services he had done his country by being a pirate, would consent to be made a lieutenant-colonel. For himself he would have spurned the worthless boon ; but his bride wished it, and he consented.

Only one thing further happened before the good ship *The Family* was dismissed, with rich presents to all on board. It is painful to record (but such is human nature in some cousins) that Captain Boldheart's unmannerly cousin Tom was actually tied up to receive three dozen with a rope's end 'for cheekiness and making game,' when Captain Boldheart's lady begged for him, and he was spared. *The Beauty* then refitted, and the captain and his bride departed for the Indian Ocean to enjoy themselves for evermore.

Tom's Adventure at Harthover Hall



ONCE upon a time there was a little chimney-sweep, and his name was Tom. That is a short name, and you have heard it before, so you will not have much trouble in remembering it. He lived in a great town in the North country, where there were plenty of chimneys to sweep, and plenty of money for Tom to earn and his master to spend. He could not read nor write, and did not care to do either; and he never washed himself, for there was no water up the court where he lived. He cried half his time, and laughed the other half. He cried when he had to climb the dark flues, rubbing his poor knees and elbows raw; and when the soot got into his eyes, which it did every day in the week; and when his master beat him, which he did every day in the week; and when he had not enough to eat, which happened every day in the week likewise. And he laughed the other half of the day, when he was tossing halfpennies with the other boys, or playing leap-frog over the posts, or bowling stones at the horses' legs as they trotted by, which last was excellent fun, when there was a wall at hand behind

Tom's Adventure at Harthover Hall

which to hide. As for chimney-sweeping, and being hungry, and being beaten, he took all that for the way of the world, like the rain and snow and thunder, and stood manfully with his back to it till it was over, as his old donkey did to a hail-storm; and then shook his ears and was as jolly as ever, and thought of the fine times coming, when he would be a man, and a master-sweep, and sit in the public-house with a quart of beer and a long pipe, and play cards for silver money, and wear velvetens and ankle-jacks, and keep a white bulldog with one grey ear, and carry her puppies in his pocket, just like a man. And he would have apprentices—one, two, three, if he could. How he would bully them and knock them about, just as his master did to him, and make them carry home the soot sacks, while he rode before them on his donkey, with a pipe in his mouth and a flower in his buttonhole, like a king at the head of his army. Yes, there were good times coming, and when his master let him have a pull at the leavings of his beer, Tom was the jolliest boy in the whole town.

One day a smart little groom rode into the court where Tom lived. Tom was just hiding behind a wall, to heave half a brick at the horse's legs, as is the custom of that country when they welcome strangers, but the groom saw him, and halloed to him to know where Mr. Grimes the chimney-sweep lived. Now Mr. Grimes was Tom's own master, and Tom was a good man of business, and always civil to customers, so he put the half-brick down quietly behind the wall, and proceeded to take orders.

Mr. Grimes was to come up next morning to Sir John Harthover's, at the Place, for his old chimney-sweep was gone to prison, and the chimneys wanted sweeping. And so he rode away, not giving Tom time to ask what the sweep had gone to prison for, which was a matter of

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interest to Tom, as he had been in prison once or twice himself. Moreover, the groom looked so very neat and clean, with his drab gaiters, drab breeches, drab jacket, snow-white tie with a smart pin in it, and clean round ruddy face, that Tom was offended and disgusted at his appearance, and considered him a stuck-up fellow, who gave himself airs because he wore smart clothes, and other people paid for them, and went behind the wall to fetch the half-brick after all ; but did not, remembering that he had come in the way of business, and was, as it were, under a flag of truce.

His master was so delighted at his new customer that he knocked Tom down out of hand, and drank more beer that night than he usually did in two, in order to be sure of getting up in time next morning, for the more a man's head aches when he wakes, the more glad he is to turn out and have a breath of fresh air. And when he did get up at four the next morning, he knocked Tom down again, in order to teach him (as young gentlemen used to be taught at public schools) that he must be an extra good boy that day, as they were going to a very great house, and might make a very good thing of it, if they could but give satisfaction.

And Tom thought so likewise, and, indeed, would have done and behaved his best, even without being knocked down. For, of all places upon earth, Harthover Place (which he had never seen) was the most wonderful, and, of all men on earth, Sir John (whom he had seen, having been sent to gaol by him twice) was the most awful. . . .

Now, I dare say you never got up at three o'clock on a midsummer morning. Some people get up then because they want to catch salmon, and some because they want to climb Alps, and a great many more because they must, like Tom. But, I assure you, that three o'clock on a mid-

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summer morning is the pleasantest time of all the twenty-four hours, and all the three hundred and sixty-five days ; and why everyone does not get up then I never could tell, save that they are all determined to spoil their nerves and their complexions by doing all night what they might just as well do all day. But Tom, instead of going out to dinner at half-past eight at night, and to a ball at ten, and finishing off somewhere between twelve and four, went to bed at seven, when his master went to the public-house, and slept like a dead pig, for which reason he was as pert as a gamecock (who always gets up early to wake the maids), and just ready to get up when the fine gentlemen and ladies were just ready to go to bed.

So he and his master set out ; Grimes rode the donkey in front, and Tom and the brushes walked behind, out of the court and up the street, past the closed window-shutters, and the winking weary policemen, and the roofs all shining grey in the grey dawn.

They passed through the pitmen's village, all shut up and silent now, and through the turnpike ; and then they were out in the real country, and plodding along the black dusty road, between black slag walls, with no sound but the groaning and thumping of the pit-engine in the next field. But soon the road grew white, and the walls likewise ; and at the wall's foot grew long grass and gay flowers, all drenched with dew ; and instead of the groaning of the pit-engine, they heard the skylark saying his matins high up in the air, and the pit-bird warbling in the sedges, as he had warbled all night long.

All else was silent. For old Mrs. Earth was still fast asleep, and, like many pretty people, she looked still prettier asleep than awake. The great elm-trees in the gold-green meadows were fast asleep above, and the cows fast asleep beneath them ; nay, the few clouds which were

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about were fast asleep likewise, and so tired that they had lain down on the earth to rest, in long white flakes and bars, among the stems of the elm-trees, and along the tops of the alders by the stream, waiting for the sun to bid them rise and go about their day's business in the clear blue overhead.

On they went, and Tom looked and looked, for he never had been so far into the country before, and longed to get over a gate and pick buttercups and look for birds' nests in the hedge ; but Mr. Grimes was a man of business, and would not have heard of that. . . .

At last, at the bottom of a hill, they came to a spring ; not such a spring as you see here, which soaks up out of a white gravel in the bog, among red fly-catchers, and pink bottle-heath, and sweet white orchis ; nor such a one as you may see, too, here, which bubbles up under the warm sand-bank in the hollow lane, by the great tuft of lady ferns, and makes the sand dance reels at the bottom, day and night, all the year round ; not such a spring as either of those ; but a real North-country limestone fountain, like one of those in Sicily or Greece, where the old heathen fancied the nymphs sat cooling themselves the hot summer's day, while the shepherds peeped at them from behind the bushes. Out of a low cave of rock at the foot of a limestone crag, the great fountain rose, quelling, and bubbling, and gurgling, so clear that you could not tell where the water ended and the air began ; and ran away under the road, a stream large enough to turn a mill ; among blue geranium, and golden globe-flower, and wild raspberry, and the bird-cherry with its tassels of snow.

And there Grimes stopped, and looked ; and Tom looked too. Tom was wondering whether anything lived in that dark cave, and came out at night to fly in the meadows. But Grimes was not wondering at all. With-

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out a word, he got off his donkey, and clambered over the low road wall, and knelt down, and began dipping his ugly head into the spring—and very dirty he made it.

Tom was picking the flowers as fast as he could. . . . But when he saw Grimes actually wash, he stopped, quite astonished ; and when Grimes had finished, and began shaking his ears to dry them, he said :

‘ Why, master, I never saw you do that before.’

‘ Nor will again, most likely. ’Twasn’t for cleanliness I did it, but for coolness. I’d be ashamed to want washing every week or so, like any smutty collier lad.’

‘ I wish I might go and dip my head in,’ said poor little Tom. ‘ It must be as good as putting it under the town pump ; and there is no beadle here to drive a chap away.’

‘ Thou come along,’ said Grimes ; ‘ what dost want with washing thyself ? Thou did not drink half a-gallon of beer last night, like me.’

‘ I don’t care for you,’ said naughty Tom, and ran down to the stream, and began washing his face.

Grimes . . . dashed at him with horrid words, and tore him up from his knees, and began beating him. But Tom was accustomed to that, and got his head safe between Mr. Grimes’ legs, and kicked his shins with all his might. . . .

And now they had gone three miles and more, and came to Sir John’s lodge-gates.

Very grand lodges they were, with very grand iron gates and stone gate-posts, and on the top of each a most dreadful boggy, all teeth, horns, and tail, which was the crest which Sir John’s ancestors wore in the Wars of the Roses ; and very prudent men they were to wear it, for all their enemies must have run for their lives at the very first sight of them.

Grimes rang at the gate, and out came a keeper on the spot, and opened.

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'I was told to expect thee,' he said. 'Now thou'lt be so good as to keep to the main avenue and not let me find a hare or a rabbit on thee when thou comest back. I shall look sharp for one, I tell thee.'

'Not if it's in the bottom of the soot-bag,' quoth Grimes, and at that he laughed; and the keeper laughed and said:

'If that's thy sort, I may as well walk up with thee to the hall.'

'I think thou best had. It's thy business to see after thy game, man, and not mine.'

So the keeper went with them; and, to Tom's surprise, he and Grimes chatted together all the way quite pleasantly. He did not know that a keeper is only a poacher turned outside in, and a poacher a keeper turned inside out.

They walked up a great lime avenue, a full mile long, and between their stems Tom peeped trembling at the horns of the sleeping deer, which stood up among the ferns. Tom had never seen such enormous trees, and as he looked up he fancied that the blue sky rested on their heads. But he was puzzled very much by a strange murmuring noise, which followed them all the way—so much puzzled that at last he took courage to ask the keeper what it was.

He spoke very civilly, and called him sir, for he was horribly afraid of him, which pleased the keeper; and he told him that they were the bees about the lime-flowers.

'What are bees?' asked Tom.

'What make honey.'

'What is honey?' asked Tom.

'Thou hold thy noise,' said Grimes.

'Let the boy be,' said the keeper. 'He's a civil young chap now, and that's more than he'll be long if he bides with thee.'

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Grimes laughed, for he took that for a compliment.

'I wish I were a keeper,' said Tom, 'to live in such a beautiful place, and wear green velveteens, and have a real dog-whistle at my button, like you.'

The keeper laughed; he was a kind-hearted fellow enough. . . .

By this time they were come up to the great iron gates in front of the house; and Tom stared through them at the rhododendrons and azaleas, which were all in flower; and then at the house itself, and wondered how many chimneys there were in it and how long ago it was built, and what was the man's name that built it, and whether he got much money for his job.

These last were very difficult questions to answer. For Harthover had been built at ninety different times, and in nineteen different styles, and looked as if somebody had built a whole street of houses of every imaginable shape, and then stirred them together with a spoon. . . .

Tom and his master did not go in through the great iron gates, as if they had been Dukes or Bishops, but round the back way—and a very long way round it was—and into a little back-door, where the ash-boy let them in, yawning horribly; and then in a passage the housekeeper met them, in such a flowered chintz dressing-gown that Tom mistook her for My Lady herself, and she gave Grimes solemn orders about 'You will take care of this, and take care of that,' as if he was going up the chimneys, and not Tom. And Grimes listened, and said every now and then, under his voice, 'You'll mind that, you little beggar?' And Tom did mind—all, at least, that he could. And then the housekeeper turned them into a grand room, all covered up in sheets of brown paper, and bade them begin, in a lofty and tremendous voice; and so, after a whimper or two, and a kick from his master, into the grate

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Tom went, and up the chimney, while a housemaid stayed in the room to watch the furniture ; to whom Mr. Grimes paid many playful and chivalrous compliments, but met with very slight encouragement in return.

How many chimneys Tom swept, I cannot say ; but he swept so many that he got quite tired, and puzzled too, for they were not like the town flues to which he was accustomed, but such as you would find—if you would only get up them and look, which perhaps you would not like to do—in old country-houses, large and crooked chimneys, which had been altered again and again, till they ran one into another. . . . So Tom fairly lost his way in them ; not that he cared much for that, though he was in pitchy darkness, for he was as much at home in a chimney as a mole is underground ; but at last, coming down, as he thought, the right chimney, he came down the wrong one, and found himself standing on the hearthrug in a room the like of which he had never seen before.

Tom had never seen the like. He had never been in gentlefolks' rooms but when the carpets were all up, and the curtains down, and the furniture huddled together under a cloth, and the pictures covered with aprons and dusters ; and he had often enough wondered what the rooms were like when they were all ready for the quality to sit in. And now he saw, and he thought the sight very pretty.

The room was all dressed in white—white window-curtains, white bed-curtains, white furniture, and white walls, with just a few lines of pink here and there. The carpet was all over gay little flowers ; and the walls were hung with pictures in gilt frames, which amused Tom very much. There were pictures of ladies and gentlemen, and pictures of horses and dogs. The horses he liked ; but the dogs he did not care for much, for there were no bull-

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dogs among them, not even a terrier. But the two pictures which took his fancy most were, one a Man in long garments, with little children and their mothers round Him, Who was laying His hand upon the children's heads. That was a very pretty picture, Tom thought, to hang in a lady's room ; for he could see that it was a lady's room by the dresses which lay about.

The other picture was that of a Man nailed to a cross, which surprised Tom much. He fancied that he had seen something like it in a shop-window. But why was it there ? ' Poor Man ! ' thought Tom, ' and He looks so kind and quiet. But why should the lady have such a sad picture as that in her room ? Perhaps it was some kinsman of hers, who had been murdered by the savages in foreign parts, and she kept it there for a remembrance.' And Tom felt sad and awed, and turned to look at something else.

The next thing he saw, and that, too, puzzled him, was a washing-stand, with ewers and basins, and soap and brushes, and towels, and a large bath full of clean water—what a heap of things all for washing ! ' She must be a very dirty lady,' thought Tom, ' by my master's rule, to want as much scrubbing as all that. But she must be very cunning to put the dirt out of the way so well afterwards, for I don't see a speck about the room, not even on the very towels.'

And then, looking toward the bed, he saw that dirty lady, and held his breath with astonishment.

Under the snow-white coverlet, upon the snow-white pillow, lay the most beautiful little girl that Tom had ever seen. Her cheeks were almost as white as the pillow, and her hair was like threads of gold spread all about over the bed. She might have been as old as Tom, or maybe a year or two older ; but Tom did not think of that. He

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thought only of her delicate skin and golden hair, and wondered whether she was a real live person, or one of the wax dolls he had seen in the shops. But when he saw her breathe, he made up his mind that she was alive, and stood staring at her, as if she had been an angel out of heaven.

No. She cannot be dirty. She never could have been dirty, thought Tom to himself. And then he thought, 'And are all people like that when they are washed?' And he looked at his own wrist, and tried to rub the soot off, and wondered whether it ever would come off. 'Certainly I should look much prettier then, if I grew at all like her.'

And, looking round, he suddenly saw, standing close to him, a little ugly, black, ragged figure, with bleared eyes and grinning white teeth. He turned on it angrily. What did such a little black ape want in that sweet young lady's room? And behold, it was himself, reflected in a great mirror, the like of which Tom had never seen before.

And Tom, for the first time in his life, found out that he was dirty, and burst into tears with shame and anger, and turned to sneak up the chimney again and hide; and upset the fender and threw the fire-irons down with a noise as of ten thousand tin kettles tied to ten thousand mad dogs' tails.

Up jumped the little white lady in her bed, and, seeing Tom, screamed as shrill as any peacock. In rushed a stout old nurse from the next room, and, seeing Tom likewise, made up her mind that he had come to rob, plunder, destroy, and burn; and dashed at him, as he lay over the fender, so fast that she caught him by the jacket.

But she did not hold him. Tom had been in a policeman's hands many a time, and out of them, too, what is more; and he would have been ashamed to face his friends for ever if he had been stupid enough to be caught



Down the tree he went
like a cat

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by an old woman ; so he doubled under the good lady's arm, across the room, and out of the window in a moment.

He did not need to drop out, though he would have done so bravely enough ; nor even to let himself down a spout, which would have been an old game to him ; for once he got up by a spout to the church roof, he said to take jackdaws' eggs, but the policeman said to steal lead ; and, when he was seen on high, sat there till the sun got too hot, and came down by another spout, leaving the policemen to go back to the station-house and eat their dinners.

But all under the window spread a tree, with great leaves and sweet white flowers, almost as big as his head. It was magnolia, I suppose ; but Tom knew nothing about that, and cared less ; for down the tree he went, like a cat, and across the garden lawn, and over the iron railings, and up the park towards the wood, leaving the old nurse to scream ' Murder ! ' and ' Fire ! ' at the window.

The under-gardener, mowing, saw Tom, and threw down his scythe, caught his leg in it, and cut his shin open, whereby he kept his bed for a week ; but in his hurry he never knew it, and gave chase to poor Tom. The dairymaid heard the noise, got the churn between her knees, and tumbled over it, spilling all the cream ; and yet she jumped up, and gave chase to Tom. A groom cleaning Sir John's hack at the stables let him go loose, whereby he kicked himself lame in five minutes ; but he ran out and gave chase to Tom. Grimes upset the soot-sack in the new-gravelled yard, and spoilt it all utterly ; but he ran out and gave chase to Tom. The old steward opened the park-gate in such a hurry that he hung up his pony's chin upon the spikes, and, for aught I know, it hangs there still ; but he jumped off, and gave chase to Tom. The ploughman left his horses at the headland,

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and one jumped over the fence, and pulled the other into the ditch, plough and all ; but he ran on, and gave chase to Tom. The keeper, who was taking a stoat out of a trap, let the stoat go, and caught his own finger ; but he jumped up, and ran after Tom ; and, considering what he said and how he looked, I should have been sorry for Tom if he had caught him. Sir John looked out of his study window (for he was an early old gentleman) and up at the nurse, and a martin dropped mud in his eye, so that he had at last to send for the doctor ; and yet he ran out and gave chase to Tom. . . . Only My Lady did **not** give chase ; for when she had put her head out of the window, her night wig fell into the garden, and she had to ring up her lady's-maid, and send her down for it privately, which quite put her out of the running, so that she came in nowhere, and is consequently not placed.

In a word, never was there heard at Hall Place—not even when the fox was killed in the conservatory among acres of broken glass and tons of smashed flower-pots—such a noise, row, hubbub, babel, shindy, hullabaloo, stramash, charivari, and total contempt of dignity, repose, and order, as that day, when Grimes, the gardener, the groom, the dairymaid, Sir John, the steward, the ploughman, and the keeper, all ran up the park, shouting, ‘ Stop, thief ! ’ in the belief that Tom had at least a thousand pounds’ worth of jewels in his empty pockets ; and the very magpies and jays followed Tom up, screaming and screaming, as if he were a hunted fox, beginning to droop his brush.

A Farewell Appearance

A Dog Story for Children



‘ANDY, come here, sir; I want you.’ The little girl who spoke was standing by the table in the morning-room of a London house one summer day, and she spoke to a small silver-grey terrier lying curled up at the foot of one of the window curtains.

As Dandy happened to be particularly comfortable just then, he pretended not to hear, in the hope that his child-mistress would not press the point.

But she did not choose to be trifled with in this way : he was called more imperiously still, until he could dissemble no longer, and came out gradually, stretching himself and yawning with a deep sense of injury.

‘I know you haven’t been asleep; I saw you watching the flies,’ she said. ‘Come up here, on the table.’

Seeing there was no help for it, he obeyed, and sat down on the table-cloth opposite to her, with his tongue hanging out and his eyes blinking, waiting her pleasure.

Dandy was rather particular as to the hands he allowed to touch him, but, generally speaking, he found it pleasant

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enough (when he had nothing better to do) to resign himself to be pulled about, lectured, or caressed by Hilda.

She was a strikingly pretty child, with long curling brown locks, and a petulant profile, which reminded one of Mr. Doyle's charming, wilful little fairy princesses.

On the whole, although Dandy privately considered she had taken rather a liberty in disturbing him, he was willing to overlook it.

'I've been thinking, Dandy,' said Hilda reflectively, 'that as you and Lady Angelina will be thrown a good deal together when we go into the country next week, you ought to know one another, and you've never been properly introduced yet, so I'm going to introduce you now.'

Now Lady Angelina was only Hilda's doll, and a doll, too, with perhaps as few ideas as any doll ever had yet—which is a good deal to say.

Dandy despised her with all the enlightenment of a thoroughly superior dog. He considered there was simply nothing in her, except possibly bran, and it had made him jealous and angry for a long time to notice the influence that this staring, simpering creature had managed to gain over her mistress.

'Now sit up,' said Hilda. Dandy sat up. He felt that committed him to nothing, but he was careful not to look at Lady Angelina, who was lolling ungracefully in the work-basket with her toes turned in.

'Lady Angelina,' said Hilda next, with great ceremony, 'let me introduce my particular friend, Mr. Dandy. Dandy, you ought to bow and say something nice and clever, only you can't, so you must give Angelina your paw instead.'

Here was an insult for a self-respecting dog! Dandy

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determined never to disgrace himself by presenting his paw to a doll ; it was quite against his principles. He dropped on all fours rebelliously.

‘ That’s very rude of you,’ said Hilda, ‘ but you shall do it. Angelina will think it so odd of you. Sit up again and give your paw, and let Angelina stroke your head.’

The dog’s little black nose wrinkled, and his lips twitched, showing his sharp white teeth. He was not going to be touched by Angelina’s flabby wax hand if he could help it !

Unfortunately, Hilda, like older people sometimes, was bent upon forcing persons to know one another, in spite of an obvious unwillingness on at least one side, and so she brought the doll up to the terrier, and, taking one limp pink arm, attempted to pat the dog’s head with it.

This was too much. His eyes flamed red like two signal lamps ; there was a sharp sudden snap, and the next minute Lady Angelina’s right arm was crunched viciously between Dandy’s keen teeth.

After that there was a terrible pause ; Dandy knew he was in for it, but he was not sorry. He dropped the mangled pieces of wax one by one, and stood there with his head on one side, growling to himself, but wincing for all that, for he was afraid to meet Hilda’s indignant grey eyes.

‘ You abominable, barbarous dog !’ she said at last, using the longest words she could, to impress him. ‘ See what you’ve done ! You’ve bitten poor Lady Angelina’s arm off.’

He could not deny it ; he had. He looked down at the fragments before him, and then sullenly up again at Hilda. His eyes said what he felt—‘ I’m glad of it—serves her right ; I’d do it again.’

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'You deserve to be well whipped,' continued Hilda severely; 'but you do howl so. I shall leave you to your own conscience' (a favourite remark of her governess), 'until your bad heart is touched, and you come here and say you're sorry, and beg both our pardons. I only wish you could be made to pay for a new arm. Go away out of my sight, you bad dog; I can't bear to look at you!'

Dandy, still impenitent, moved leisurely down from the table and out of the open door into the kitchen. He was thinking that Angelina's arm was very nasty, and he should like something to take the taste away. When he got downstairs, however, he found the butcher was calling and had left the area gate open, which struck him as a good opportunity for a ramble. By the time he came back Hilda would have forgotten all about it, or she might think he was lost, and find out which was the more valuable animal—a silly, useless doll, or an intelligent dog like himself.

Hilda saw him from the window as he bolted out with tail erect. 'He's doing it to show off,' she said to herself. 'He's a horrid dog sometimes! But I suppose I shall have to forgive him when he comes back!'

However, Dandy did not come back that night, nor all next day, nor the day after that, nor any more, for the fact was, an experienced dog-stealer had long had his eye upon him, and Dandy happened to come across him that very morning.

He was not such a stupid dog as to be unaware he was doing wrong in following a stranger, but then the man had such delightful suggestions about him of things dogs love to eat, and Dandy had started for his run in a disobedient temper.

So he followed the broken-nosed, bandy-legged man till they reached a narrow, lonely alley, and then, just as

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Dandy was thinking about going home again, the stranger turned suddenly on him, hemmed him up in a corner, caught him dexterously up in one hand, tapped him sharply on the head, and slipped him, stunned, into a capacious inside pocket.

* * * * *

'I thought werry likely I should come on you in 'ere, Bob,' said a broken-nosed man in a fur cap, about a week after Dandy's disappearance, to a short, red-faced, hoarse man who was drinking at the bar of a public-house.

'Ah,' said the hoarse man; 'well, you ain't fur out, as it happens.'

'Yes, I did,' said the other. 'I met your partner the other day, and he tells me you're looking out for a noo Toby dawg. I've got a article somewheres about me at this moment I should like you to cast a eye over.'

And diving into his inside pocket, he fished out a small, shining silver-grey terrier, which he slammed down rather roughly on the pewter counter.

Of course the terrier was Hilda's lost Dandy. For some reason or other the dog-stealer had not thought it prudent to claim the reward offered for him, as he had intended to do at first, and Dandy not being of a breed in fashionable demand, the man was trying to get rid of him now for the best price he could obtain from humble purchasers.

'Well, we *do* want a understudy, and that's a fact,' said the hoarse man, who was one of the managers of Mr. Punch's Theatre. 'The Toby as travels with us now is breakin' up—getting so blind he don't know Punch from Jack Ketch. But that there animal 'ud never make a 'it as a Toby,' he said, examining Dandy critically. 'Why, that's bin a gen'leman's dawg once, that has. We don't want no amatoors on our show.'

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'It's the amatoors as draws nowadays,' said the dog-fancier. 'Not but what this 'ere partic'lar dawg has his gifts for the purfession. You see him sit up and smoke a pipe and give yer his paw, now.'

And he put Dandy through these performances on the sloppy counter. It was much worse than being introduced to Angelina; but hunger and fretting and rough treatment had broken down the dog's spirit, and it was with dull submission now that he repeated the poor little tricks Hilda had taught him with such pretty perseverance.

'It's no use talking,' said the showman, though he began to show some signs of yielding. 'It takes a tyke born and bred to make a regular Toby. And this ain't a young dog, and he ain't 'ad no proper dramatic eddication. He's not worth to us not the lowest you'd take for him.'

'Well, now, I'll tell you 'ow fur I'm willing to meet yer,' said the other persuasively. 'You shall have him, seein' it's *you*, for——' And so they haggled on for a little longer, but at the end of the interview Dandy had changed hands, and was permanently engaged as a member of Mr. Punch's travelling company.

A few days after that Dandy made acquaintance with his strange fellow-performers. The men had put the show up on a deserted part of a common near London, behind the railings of a little cemetery, where no one was likely to interfere with them; and the new Toby was hoisted up on the very narrow and uncomfortable shelf to go through his first interview with Mr. Punch.

When that popular gentleman appeared at his side Dandy examined him with pricked and curious ears. He was rather odd-looking, but his smile, though there was certainly a good deal of it, seemed genial and encouraging,

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and the poor dog wagged his tail in a conciliatory manner—he wanted someone to be kind to him again.

‘The dawg’s a fool, Bob,’ growled Jem, the other proprietor of the show, a little, shabby, dirty-faced man with a thin and ragged red beard, who was watching the experiment from the outside. ‘He’s a-waggin’ his bloomin’ tail. He’ll be a-lickin’ of Punch’s face next! Try him with a squeak.’

And Bob produced a sound which was a hideous compound of chuckle, squeak, and crow, when Dandy, in the full persuasion that the strange figure must be a new variety of cat, flew at it blindly.

But though he managed to get a firm grip of its great hook-nose, there was not much satisfaction to be got out of that. The hard wood made his teeth ache, and besides, in his excitement he overbalanced himself and came suddenly down upon Mr. Robert Blott inside, who swore horribly and put him up again.

Then, after a little highly mysterious dancing up and down, and wagging his head, Mr. Punch, in the most uncalled-for manner, hit Dandy over the head with a stick, in order, as Jem put it, ‘to get up a ill-feeling between them’—a wanton insult that made the dog madder than ever.

He did not revenge himself at once; he only barked furiously and retreated to his corner of the stage. But the next time Punch came sidling cautiously up to him Dandy made, not for his wooden head, but for a place between his shoulders, which he thought looked more yielding.

There was a savage howl from below. Punch dropped in a heap on the narrow shelf, and Mr. Blott sucked his finger and thumb with many curses.

Mr. Punch was not killed, however, though Dandy had

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at first imagined he had settled him. He revived almost directly, when he proceeded to rain down such a shower of savage blows from his thick stick upon every part of the dog's defenceless body that Dandy was completely subdued long before his master thought fit to leave off.

By the time the lesson came to an end, Dandy was sore and shaken and dazed, for Bob had allowed himself to be a little carried away by personal feeling. Still, it only showed Dandy more plainly that Mr. Punch was not a person to be trifled with, and, though he liked him as little as ever, he respected as well as feared him.

Unfortunately for Dandy, he was a highly intelligent terrier, of an inquiring turn of mind, and so, after he had been led about for some days with the show, and was able to think things over and put them together, he began to suspect that Punch and the other figures were not alive after all, but only a particularly ugly set of dolls, which Mr. Blott put in motion in some way best known to himself.

From the time he was perfectly certain of this he felt a degraded dog indeed. He had scorned once to allow himself to be even touched by Angelina (who, at least, was not unpleasant to look at, and always quite in-offensive); now, every hour of his life, he found himself ordered about and insulted before a crowd of shabby strangers by a vulgar, tawdry doll, to which he was obliged to be civil and even affectionate—as if it was something real!

Dandy was an honest dog, and so, of course, it was very revolting to his feelings to have to impose upon the public in this manner. But Mr. Punch, if he was only a doll, had a way of making himself obeyed.

And though, in time, the new Toby learnt to perform his duties respectably enough, he did so without the least enthusiasm. It wounded his pride, besides making him

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very uncomfortable, when Punch caught hold of his head, and something with red whiskers and a blue frock took him by the hind legs and danced jerkily round the stage with him. He hated that more than anything. Day by day he grew more miserable and homesick.

He loathed the Punch and Judy show and every doll in it, from the hero down to the ghost and the baby. Jem and Bob were not actually unkind to him, and would have been friendly had he allowed it. But he was a dainty dog, with a natural dislike to ill-dressed and dirty persons, and shrank from their rough, if well-meant, advances. He never could forget what he had once been, and what he was, and often, in the close sleeping-room of some common lodging-house, he dreamed of the comfortable home he had lost, and Hilda's pretty imperious face, and woke to miss her more than ever.

At first his new masters had been careful to keep him from all chance of escape, and Bob led him after the show by a string ; but as he seemed to be getting resigned to his position, allowed him to run loose.

He was trotting tamely at Jem's heels one hot August morning, followed by a small train of admiring children, when all at once he became aware that he was in a street he knew well. He was near his old home ! A few minutes' hard run and he would be safe with Hilda !

He looked up sideways at Jem, who was beating his drum and blowing his pipes, with his eyes on the lower and upper windows. Bob's head was inside the show, and both were in front and not thinking of him just then.

Dandy stopped, turned round upon the unwashed children behind, looked wistfully up at them, as much as to say, ' Don't tell,' and then bolted at the top of his speed.

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There was a shrill cry from the children at once of 'Oh, Mr. Punch, sir, please—your dawg's a-runnin' away from yer!' and angry calls to return from the two men. Jem even made an attempt to pursue him, but the drum was too much in his way, and a small dog is not easily caught at the best of times when he takes it into his head to run away. So he gave it up sulkily.

Meanwhile Dandy ran on, till the shouts behind died away. Once an errand-boy, struck by the parti-coloured frill round the dog's neck, tried to stop him, but he managed to slip past him and run out into the middle of the road, and kept on blindly, narrowly escaping being run over several times by tradesmen's carts.

And at last, panting and exhausted, he reached the well-remembered gate, out of which he had marched so defiantly it seemed long ages ago.

The railings were covered with wire-netting inside, as he knew, but fortunately someone had left the gate open, and he pattered eagerly down the area steps, feeling safe and at home at last.

The kitchen door was shut, but the window was not, and, as the sill was low, he contrived to scramble up somehow and jump into the kitchen, where he reckoned upon finding friends to protect him.

But he found it empty, and looking strangely cold and desolate. Only a small fire was smouldering in the grate, instead of the cheerful blaze he remembered there, and he could not find the cook—an especial patroness of his—anywhere.

He scampered up into the hall, making straight for the morning-room, where he knew he should find Hilda curled up in one of the arm-chairs with a book.

But that room was empty too. The shutters were up, and the half-light which streamed in above them showed

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a dreary state of confusion. The writing-table was covered with a sheet and put away in the corner, the chairs were piled up on the centre table, the carpet had been taken up and rolled under the sideboard, and there was a faint warm smell of flue and dust and putty in the place.

He pattered out again, feeling puzzled and a little afraid, and went up the bare stone staircase to find Hilda in one of the upper rooms, perhaps in the nursery.

But the upper rooms, too, were all bare and sheeted and ghostly, and, higher up, the stairs were spotted with great stars of whitewash, and there were ladders and planks on which strange men in dirty white blouses were talking and joking a great deal, and doing a little white-washing now and then, when they had time for it.

Their voices echoed down the stairs with a hollow noise that scared him, and he was afraid to venture any higher. Besides, he knew by this time somehow that Hilda, her father and mother, all the friends he had counted upon seeing again, would not be found in any part of that house.

It was the same house, though stripped and deserted, but all the life and colour and warmth had gone out of it ; and he ran here and there, seeking for them in vain.

He picked his way forlornly down to the hall again, and there he found a mouldy old woman with a duster pinned over her head and a dustpan and brush in her hand ; for, unhappily for him, the family, servants and all, had gone away some days before into the country, and this old woman had been put into the house as caretaker.

She dropped her brush and pan with a start as she saw him, for she was not fond of dogs.

‘ Why, deary me,’ she said morosely, ‘ if it hasn’t give

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me quite a turn. However did the nasty little beast get in ? a-gallivantin' about as if the 'ole place belonged to him.'

Dandy sat up and begged. In the old days he would not have done such a thing for any servant below a cook (who was always worth being polite to), but he felt a very reduced and miserable little animal indeed just then, and he thought she might be able to take him to Hilda.

But the charwoman's only idea was to get rid of him as quickly as possible.

'Why, if it ain't a Toby dawg !' she cried, as her dim old eyes caught sight of his frill. 'Here, you get out ; you don't belong 'ere !'

And she took him up by the scruff of the neck and went to the front door. As she opened it, a sound came from the street outside which Dandy knew only too well : it was the long-drawn squeak of Mr. Punch.

'That's where he came from, I'll bet a penny,' cried the caretaker, and she went down the steps and called over the gate, 'Hi, master ! You don't happen to have lost your Toby dawg, do you ? Is this him ?'

The man with the drum came up—it was Jem himself ; and thereupon Dandy was ignominiously handed over the railings to him, and delivered up once more to the hard life he had so nearly succeeded in shaking off.

He had a severe beating when they got him home, as a warning to him not to rebel again ; and he never did try to run away a second time. What was the good of it ? Hilda was gone he did not know where, and the house was a home no longer.

So he went patiently about with the show, a dismal little dog-captive, the dullest little Toby that ever delighted a street audience ; so languid and listless at times that Mr. Punch was obliged to rap him really hard on the



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head before he could induce him to take the slightest notice of him.

But in spite of all this, he made the people laugh ; most, perhaps, at night, when the show was lit up by a flaring can of paraffin, and he sat, with his feet in Punch's coffin, howling dolefully at the melancholy strains of Jem's pipes, which Dandy always found too much for his feelings.

* * * * *

It was winter time, about a fortnight after Christmas, and the night was snowy and slushy outside, though warm enough in the kitchen of a big Belgravian house. The kitchen was crowded ; a stream of waiters and gorgeous powdered footmen and smart maids was perpetually coming and going ; in front of the fire a tired little terrier, with a shabby frill round his neck, was basking in the blaze, and near him sat a little dirty-faced man with a red beard, who was being listened to with some attention by a few of the upper servants, who were enjoying a moment's leisure.

' Yes,' he was saying, ' I've been in the purfession a sight o' years now, but I don't know as I ever heard on a Punch's show like me and my mates' bein' engaged for a reg'lar swell evenin' party afore. It shows, to my mind, as public taste is a-coming round—it ain't quite so low as formerly.'

The little man was Jem ; and he, with his partner Bob, and Dandy, were in the house owing to an eccentric notion of its master, who happened to have a taste for experiments.

He agreed with many who consider that some kind of amusement in the intervals of dancing is welcome to children ; but it was one of his ideas, too, that they must be getting a little bored by the inevitable lecture with the dissolving views, and find a conjurer (even after seeing

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him several times in a fortnight) as a rule more bewildering than amusing ; although as a present-producing animal, the last has his compensations.

He was curious to see whether the drama of Punch and Judy had quite lost its old power to please. He could easily have hired an elegant and perfectly refined form of the entertainment from some of the fashionable toy-shops or ' universal providers,' only unfortunately in these improved versions much of the original fun is often found to have been refined away.

So he had decided upon introducing the original Mr. Punch from his native streets, and in his natural uncivilized state, and Jem and Bob chanced to be the persons selected to exhibit him.

' Juveniles is all alike,' observed the butler, who, having been commissioned to engage the showmen, condescended to feel a fatherly interest in the affair ; ' 'igh or low, there's nothing pleases 'em more than seeing one party a-fetching another party a thunderin' good whack over the 'ead. That's where, in my opinion, all these pantomimes makes a mistake. There's too much bally and music 'all about 'em, and not 'arf enough buttered slide and red-'ot poker.'

' There's plenty of 'ead-whackin' in *our* show,' said Jem, with some pride, ' for my partner, you see, he don't find as the dialogue come as fluid to him as he could wish for, so he cuts a deal of it, and what ain't squeakin' is mostly stick—like a cheap operer.'

' Your little dog seems very wet and tired,' said a pretty housemaid, bending down to pat Dandy, as he lay stretched out wearily at her feet. ' Would he eat a cake if I got one for him ?'

' He ain't, not to say, fed on cakes as a general thing,' said Jem dryly, ' but you can try him, miss, and thankee.'

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But Dandy only half raised his head and rejected the cake languidly—he was very comfortable there in the warm firelight, and the place made him feel as if he were back in his own old kitchen, but he was too tired to be hungry. ⁴⁶

‘He won’t hardly look at it,’ said the housemaid compassionately. ‘I don’t think he can be well.’

‘Well!’ said Jem. ‘*He’s* well enough; that’s all his contrariness, that is. The fact is, he thinks hisself a deal too good for the likes of us, he do—thinks he ought to be kep’ on chickin in a droring-room!’ he sneered, wasting his satire on the unconscious Dandy.

‘I tell you what it is, miss: that there dawg’s ’art ain’t in his business—he reg’lar looks down on the ’ole concern, thinks it *low*! Why, I see ’im from the werry fust a-turnin’ up his nose at it, and it downright set me against him. Give me a Toby as takes a interest in the drama! The last but one as we had, afore him, now, *he* used to look on from start to finish, and when Punch went and ’anged Jack Ketch, why, that dawg used to bark and jump about as pleased as Punch ’isself, and he’d go in among the crowd, too, and fetch back the babby as Punch pitched out o’ winder, as tender with it as a Newfunland! And he warn’t like the general run of Tobies, neither, for he got quite thick with the Punch figger—thought a deal on ’im, he did—and if you’ll believe me, when I ’ad to get the figger a noo ’ead and costoom, it broke the dawg’s ’art—he pined away quite rapid. But this ’ere one wouldn’t turn a ’air if the ’ole company went to blazes together!’

Here Bob, who had been setting up the show in one of the rooms, came into the kitchen, looking rather uneasy at finding himself in such fine company, and Dandy was spared further upbraidings, as he was called upon to follow the pair upstairs.

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They went up into a large, handsome room, where at one end there were placed rows of rout seats and chairs, and at the other the homely old show, seeming oddly out of place in its new surroundings.

Poor draggled Dandy felt more ashamed of it and himself than ever, and he was glad to get away under its ragged hangings and lie still by Bob's dirty boots till he was wanted.

And then there was the sound of children's voices and laughter as they all came trooping in, with a crisp rustle of delicate dresses and a scent of hothouse flowers and kid gloves, that reached Dandy where he lay. It reminded him of evenings long ago when Hilda had had parties, and he had been washed and combed and decked out in ribbons for the occasion, and children had played with him and given him nice things to eat—they had generally disagreed with him, but now he could only remember the pleasure and petting of it all.

He would not be petted any more ! Presently these children would see him smoking a pipe and being familiar with that low Punch. They would laugh at him, too—they always did—and Dandy, like most dogs, hated being laughed at, and never took it as a compliment.

The host's experiment was evidently a complete success : the children, even the most *blasés*, who danced the newest valse step and thought pantomimes vulgar, were delighted to meet an old friend so unexpectedly. A good many had often yearned to see the whole show right through from beginning to end, and chance or a stern nurse had never permitted it. Now their time had come, and Mr. Punch, in spite of his lamentable shortcomings in every relation of life, was received with the usual uproarious applause.

At last the hero called for his faithful dog Toby, as a

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distraction after the painful domestic scenes, in which he had left himself driven to throw his child out of window and silence the objections of his wife by becoming a widower, and accordingly Dandy was caught up and set on the shelf by his side.

The sudden glare hurt his eyes, and he sat there blinking at the audience with a pitiful want of pride in his dignity as Dog Toby.

He tried to look as if he didn't know Punch, who was doing all he could to catch his eye, for his riotous 'rooti-toot' made him shiver nervously, and long to get away from the whole thing and lie down somewhere in peace.

Jem was scowling up at him balefully. 'I know'd that 'ere dawg would go and disgrace hisself,' he was saying to himself. 'When I get him to myself, he shall catch it for this!'

Dandy was able to see better now, and he found, as he had guessed, that here was not one of his usual audiences—no homely crowd of loitering errand-boys, smirched maids-of-all-work, and ragged children jostling and turning their grinning white faces up to him.

There were children here, too—plenty of them—but children at their best and daintiest, and looking as if untidiness and quarrels were things unknown to them—though possibly they were not. The laughter, however, was much the same as he was accustomed to—more musical, perhaps, and pleasanter to hear, but quite as hearty and unrestrained. They were laughing at *him*, and he hung his head abashed.

But all at once he forgot his shame, though he did not remember Mr. Punch a bit the more for that. He ran backwards and forwards on his ledge, sniffing and whining; wagging his tail, and giving short, piteous barks in a state of the wildest excitement. The reason of it was

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this : near the end of the front row he saw a little girl who was bending eagerly forward with her pretty grey eyes wide open and a puzzled line on her forehead.

Dandy knew her at the very first glance. It was Hilda, looking more like a fairy princess than ever.

She knew him almost as soon, for her clear voice rang out above the general laughter. ' Oh, that isn't Toby—he's my own dog, my Dandy, that I lost ! It is, really. Let him come to me ; please do ! Don't you see how badly he wants to ? '

There was a sudden surprised silence at this. Even Mr. Punch was quiet for an instant ; but as soon as Dandy heard her voice he could wait no longer, and crouched for a spring.

' Catch the dog, somebody ; he's going to jump ! ' cried the master of the house, more amused than ever, from behind.

Jem was too sulky to interfere, but some good-natured grown-up person caught the trembling dog just in time to save him from a broken leg, or worse, and handed him to his delighted little mistress ; and I think the frantic joy which Dandy felt as he was clasped tight in her loving arms once more and covered her flushed face with his eager kisses more than made up for all he had suffered.

Hilda scornfully refused to have anything to do with Jem, who tried hard to convince her she was mistaken. She took her recovered favourite to her hostess.

' He really is mine ! ' she assured her earnestly ; ' and he doesn't want to be a Toby ; I'm sure he doesn't. See how he trembles when that horrid man comes near ! Dear Mrs. Lovibond, please tell them I'm to have him ! '

And of course Hilda carried her point, for the showmen were not unwilling, after a short conversation with the master of the house, to give up their rights in a dog

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who would never be much of an ornament to their profession, and was out of health into the bargain.

Hilda held Dandy, all muddy and draggled as he was, fast in her arms all through the remainder of the performance, as if she was afraid Mr. Punch might still claim him for his own ; and the dog lay there in measureless content. The hateful squeak made him start and shiver no more. He was too happy to howl at Jem's dismal pipes and drum ; they had no terrors for him any more.

' I think I should like to go home now,' she said to her hostess, when Mr. Punch had finally retired. ' Dandy is so excited. Feel how his heart beats, just there, you know. He ought to be in bed, and I want to tell them all at home so much !'

She resisted all despairing entreaties to stay from several small partners who felt life a blank after she had gone, till supper came ; and so her carriage was called, and she and Dandy drove home in it together once more.

' Dandy, you're very quiet,' she said once, as they bowled easily and swiftly along. ' Aren't you going to tell me you're glad to be mine again ?'

But Dandy could only wag his tail feebly and look up in her face with an exhausted sigh. He had suffered much, and was almost worn out ; but rest was coming to him at last.

As soon as the carriage had stopped and the door was opened, Hilda ran in, breathless with excitement.

' Oh, Parker, look !' she cried to the maid in the hall. ' Dandy is found—he's here !'

The maid took the lifeless little body from her, looked at it for a moment under the lamp, and turned away without speaking. Then she placed it gently in Hilda's arms again.

' Oh, Miss Hilda, didn't you see ?' she said, with a catch in her voice. ' Don't take on, now ; but it's come too late. Poor little dog, he's gone !'

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walmers, Junior

The Story of Cobbs, the Boots at the Holly-Tree Inn



HERE had he been in his time ? the boots repeated, when I asked him the question. Why, he had been everywhere ! And what had he been ? Bless you, he had been everything you could mention a'most !

Seen a good deal ? Why, of course he had. I should say so, he could assure me, if I only knew about a twentieth part of what had come in *his* way. Why, it would be easier for him, he expected, to tell what he hadn't seen than what he had. Ah ! A deal, it would.

What was the curiousest thing he had seen ? Well, he didn't know. He couldn't momentarily name what was the curiousest thing he had seen—unless it was a unicorn—and he see *him* once at a fair. But supposing a young gentleman not eight year old was to run away with a fine young woman of seven, might I think *that* a queer start ? Certainly. Then that was a start as he himself had had his bleseed eyes on, and he hed cleaned the shoes they run

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away in—and they was so little that he couldn't get his hand into 'em.

Master Harry Walmers's father, you see, he lived at the Elmses, down away by Shooter's Hill there, six or seven miles from Lunnon. He was a gentleman of spirit, and good-looking, and held his head up when he walked, and had what you may call fire about him. He wrote poetry, and he rode, and he ran, and he cricketed, and he danced, and he acted, and he done it all equally beautiful. He was uncommon proud of Master Harry, as was his only child ; but he didn't spoil him neither. He was a gentleman that had a will of his own and a eye of his own, and that would be minded. Consequently, though he made quite a companion of the fine bright boy, and was delighted to see him so fond of reading his fairy books, and was never tired of hearing him say ' My name is Norval,' or hearing him sing his songs about young May moons is beaming love, and ' When he as adores thee has left but the name,' and that, still he kept the command over the child, and the child *was* a child, and it's to be wished more of 'em was !

How did boots happen to know all this ? Why, through being under-gardener. Of course, he couldn't be under-gardener, and be always about, in the summer-time, near the windows on the lawn, a-mowing, and sweeping, and weeding, and pruning, and this and that, without getting acquainted with the ways of the family. Even supposing Master Harry hadn't come up to him one morning early, and said, ' Cobbs, how should you spell Norah, if you was asked ?' and then began cutting it in print all over the fence.

He couldn't say he had taken particular notice of children before that ; but really it was pretty to see them two mites a-going about the place together, deep in love.

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And the courage of the boy ! Bless your soul, he'd have throwed off his little hat, and tucked up his little sleeves, and gone in at a lion, he would, if they had happened to meet one, and she had been frightened of him. One day he stops, along with her, where boots was hoeing weeds in the gravel, and says, speaking up, 'Cobbs,' he says, 'I like *you*.' 'Do you, sir ? I'm proud to hear it.' 'Yes, I do, Cobbs. Why do I like you, do you think, Cobbs ?' 'Don't know, Master Harry, I am sure.' 'Because Norah likes you, Cobbs.' 'Indeed, sir ? That's very gratifying.' 'Gratifying, Cobbs ? It's better than millions of the brightest diamonds to be liked by Norah.' 'Certainly, sir.' 'You're going away, ain't you, Cobbs ?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Would you like another situation, Cobbs ?' 'Well, sir, I shouldn't object, if it was a good un.' 'Then, Cobbs,' says he, 'you shall be our head-gardener when we are married.' And he tucks her, in her little sky-blue mantle, under his arm, and walks away.

Boots could assure me that it was better than a picter, and equal to a play, to see them babies, with their long, bright, curling hair, their sparkling eyes, and their beautiful light tread, a-rambling about the garden, deep in love. Boots was of opinion that the birds believed they was birds, and kept up with 'em, singing to please 'em. Sometimes they would creep under the tulip-tree, and would sit there with their arms round one another's necks, and their soft cheeks touching, a-reading about the prince and the dragon, and the good and bad enchantress, and the king's fair daughter. Sometimes he would hear them planning about having a house in the forest, keeping bees and a cow, and living entirely on milk and honey. Once he came upon them by the pond, and heard Master Harry say, 'Adorable Norah, kiss me, and say you love me to distraction, or I'll jump in head-foremost.' And boots

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made no question he would have done it if she hadn't complied. On the whole, boots said it had a tendency to make him feel as if he was in love himself—only he didn't exactly know who with.

'Cobbs,' said Master Harry one evening, when Cobbs was watering the flowers, 'I am going on a visit, this present midsummer, to my grandmamma's at York.'

'Are you indeed, sir? I hope you'll have a pleasant time. I am going into Yorkshire myself when I leave here.'

'Are you going to your grandmamma's, Cobbs?'

'No, sir. I haven't got such a thing.'

'Not as a grandmamma, Cobbs?'

'No, sir.'

The boy looked on at the watering of the flowers for a little while, and then said, 'I shall be very glad indeed to go, Cobbs—Norah's going.'

'You'll be all right then, sir,' says Cobbs, 'with your beautiful sweetheart by your side.'

'Cobbs,' returned the boy, flushing, 'I never let anybody joke about it, when I can prevent them.'

'It wasn't a joke, sir,' says Cobbs, with humility—'wasn't so meant.'

'I am glad of that, Cobbs, because I like you, you know, and you're going to live with us.—Cobbs!'

'Sir.'

'What do you think my grandmother gives me when I go down there?'

'I couldn't so much as make a guess, sir.'

'A Bank of England five-pound note, Cobbs.'

'Whew!' says Cobbs, 'that's a spanking sum of money, Master Harry.'

'A person could do a deal with such a sum of money as that—couldn't a person, Cobbs?'

'I believe you, sir!'

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‘Cobbs,’ said the boy, ‘I’ll tell you a secret. At Norah’s house, they have been joking her about me, and pretending to laugh at our being engaged—pretending to make game of it, Cobbs!’

‘Such, sir,’ says Cobbs, ‘is the depravity of human natur’.

The boy, looking exactly like his father, stood for a few minutes with his glowing face towards the sunset, and then departed with, ‘Good-night, Cobbs; I’m going in.’

If I was to ask boots how it happened that he was a-going to leave that place just at that present time, well, he couldn’t rightly answer me. He did suppose he might have stayed there till now if he had been anyways inclined. But, you see, he was younger then, and he wanted change. That’s what he wanted—change. Mr. Walmers, he said to him when he gave him notice of his intentions to leave: ‘Cobbs,’ he says, ‘have you anythink to complain of? I make the inquiry because if I find that any of my people really has anything to complain of, I wish to make it right if I can.’ ‘No, sir,’ says Cobbs; ‘thanking you, sir, I find myself as well sitiuated here as I could hope to be anywheres. The truth is, sir, that I’m a-going to seek my fortun’.’ ‘Oh, indeed, Gobbs!’ he says. ‘I hope you may find it.’ And boots could assure me—which he did, touching his hair with his bootjack, as a salute in the way of his present calling—that he hadn’t found it yet.

Well, sir! Boots left the Elmses when his time was up, and Master Harry, he went down to the old lady’s at York, which old lady would have given that child the teeth out of her head (if she had had any), she was so wrapped up in him. What does that infant do—for infant you may call him and be within the mark—but cut away from that old lady’s with his Norah, on a expedition to go to Gretna Green and be married!



"Hands his lady out, and gives
the guard something for himself;"

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walmers, Junior

Sir, boots was at this identical Holly-Tree Inn (having left it several times since to better himself, but always coming back through one thing or another), when, one summer afternoon, the coach drives up, and out of the coach gets them two children. The guard says to our governor, 'I don't quite make out these little passengers, but the young gentleman's words was, that they was to be brought here.' The young gentleman gets out, hands his lady out, gives the guard something for himself, says to our governor, 'We're to stop here to-night, please. Sitting-room and two bedrooms will be required. Chops and cherry-pudding for two!' and tucks her, in her little sky-blue mantle, under his arm, and walks into the house much bolder than brass.

Boots leaves me to judge what the amazement of that establishment was, when these two tiny creatures all alone by themselves was marched into the Angel—so much more so when he, who had seen them without their seeing him, give the governor his views of the expedition they was upon. 'Cobbs,' says the governor, 'if this is so, I must set off myself to York, and quiet their friends' minds. In which case you must keep your eye upon 'em, and humour 'em, till I come back. But before I take these measures, Cobbs, I should wish you to find from themselves whether your opinion is correct.' 'Sir to you,' says Cobbs; 'that shall be done directly.'

So boots goes upstairs to the Angel, and there he finds Master Harry on a e-normous sofa—immense at any time, but looking like the Great Bed of Ware, compared with him—a-drying the eyes of Miss Norah with his pocket-hankecher. Their little legs was entirely off the ground, of course, and it really is not possible for boots to express to me how small them children looked.

'It's Cobbs! It's Cobbs!' cries Master Harry, and

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walmers, Junior comes running to him and catching hold of his hand. Miss Norah comes running to him on t'other side, and catching hold of his t'other hand, and they both jump for joy.

'I see you a-getting out, sir,' says Cobbs. 'I thought it was you. I thought I couldn't be mistaken in your height and figure. What's the object of your journey, sir?—matrimonial?'

'We are going to be married, Cobbs, at Gretna Green,' returned the boy. 'We have run away on purpose. Norah has been in rather low spirits, Cobbs; but she'll be happy, now we have found you to be our friend.'

'Thank you, sir, and thank *you*, miss,' says Cobbs, 'for your good opinion. *Did* you bring any luggage with you, sir?'

If I will believe boots when he gives me his word and honour upon it, the lady had got a parasol, a smelling-bottle, a round and a half of cold buttered toast, eight peppermint-drops, and a hair-brush—seemingly a doll's. The gentleman had got about half a dozen yards of string, a knife, three or four sheets of writing-paper folded up surprising small, an orange, and a chaney mug with his name upon it.

'What may be the exact natur' of your plans, sir?' says Cobbs.

'To go on,' replied the boy—which the courage of that boy was something wonderful!—'in the morning, and be married to-morrow.'

'Just so, sir,' says Cobbs. 'Would it meet your views, sir, if I was to accompany you?'

When Cobbs said this, they both jumped for joy again, and cried out, 'Oh yes, yes, Cobbs! Yes!'

'Well, sir,' says Cobbs, 'if you will excuse my having the freedom to give an opinion, what I should recommend

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would be this. I'm acquainted with a pony, sir, which, put in a pheayton that I could borrow, would take you and Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior (myself driving, if you approved), to the end of your journey in a very short space of time. I am not altogether sure, sir, that this pony will be at liberty to-morrow, but even if you had to wait over to-morrow for him, it might be worth your while. As to the small account here, sir, in case you was to find yourself running at all short, that don't signify, because I'm a part proprietor of this inn, and it could stand over.'

Boots assures me that when they clapped their hands, and jumped for joy again, and called him 'Good Cobbs!' and 'Dear Cobbs!' and bent across him to kiss one another in the delight of their confiding hearts, he felt himself the meanest rascal for deceiving 'em that ever was born.

'Is there anything you want just at present, sir?' says Cobbs, mortally ashamed of himself.

'We should like some cakes after dinner,' answered Master Harry, folding his arms, putting out one leg, and looking straight at him, 'and two apples—and jam. With dinner we should like to have toast and water. But Norah has always been accustomed to half a glass of currant wine at dessert, and so have I.'

'It shall be ordered at the bar, sir,' says Cobbs; and away he went.

Boots has the feeling as fresh upon him at this minute of speaking as he had then, that he would far rather have had it out in half a dozen rounds with the governor than have combined with him; and that he wished with all his heart there was any impossible place where these two babies could make an impossible marriage, and live impossibly happy ever afterwards. However, as it couldn't

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walmers, Junior

be, he went into the governor's plans, and the governor set off for York in half an hour.

The way in which the women of that house, without exception—every one of 'em, married *and* single—took to that boy when they heard the story, boots considers surprising. It was as much as he could do to keep 'em from dashing into the room and kissing him. They climbed up all sorts of places, at the risk of their lives, to look at him through a pane of glass. They was seven deep at the keyhole. They was out of their minds about him and his bold spirit.

In the evening, boots went into the room to see how the runaway couple was getting on. The gentleman was on the window-seat, supporting the lady in his arms. She had tears upon her face, and was lying, very tired and half asleep, with her head upon his shoulder.

'Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior, fatigued, sir ?' says Cobbs.

'Yes, she is tired, Cobbs ; but she is not used to be away from home, and she has been in low spirits again. Cobbs, do you think you could bring a biffin, please ?'

'I ask your pardon, sir,' says Cobbs. 'What was it you——'

'I think a Norfolk biffin would rouse her, Cobbs. She is very fond of them.'

Boots withdrew in search of the required restorative, and when he brought it in, the gentleman handed it to the lady, and fed her with a spoon, and took a little himself, the lady being heavy with sleep and rather cross. 'What should you think, sir,' says Cobbs, 'of a chamber candlestick ?' The gentleman approved ; the chambermaid went first, up the great staircase ; the lady, in her sky-blue mantle, followed, gallantly escorted by the gentleman ; the gentleman embraced her at her door,

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walmers, Junior
and retired to his own compartment, where boots softly
locked him up.

Boots couldn't but feel with increased acuteness what
a base deceiver he was when they consulted him at break-
fast (they had ordered sweet milk-and-water and toast
and currant-jelly over-night) about the pony. It really
was as much as he could do, he don't mind confessing to
me, to look them two young things in the face, and think
what a wicked old father of lies he had grown up to be.
Howsomever, he went on a-lying like a Trojan about the
pony. He told 'em that it did so unfort'nately happen
that the pony was half clipped, you see, and that he
couldn't be taken out in that state, for fear it should
strike to his inside. But that he'd be finished clipping
in the course of the day, and that to-morrow morning at
eight o'clock the pheayton would be ready. Boots's
view of the whole case, looking back on it in my room,
is that Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior, was beginning to
give in. She hadn't had her hair curled when she went
to bed, and she didn't seem quite up to brushing it herself,
and its getting in her eyes put her out. But nothing put
out Master Harry. He sat behind his breakfast-cup,
a-tearing away at the jelly, as if he had been his own
father.

After breakfast, boots is inclined to consider that they
drawed soldiers—at least, he knows that many such was
found in the fireplace, all on horseback. In the course
of the morning, Master Harry rang the bell—it was sur-
prising how that there boy did carry on—and said, in a
sprightly way, 'Cobbs, is there any good walks in this
neighbourhood?'

'Yes, sir,' says Cobbs. 'There's Love Lane.'

'Get out with you, Cobbs!—that was that there boy's
expression—'you're joking.'

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'Begging your pardon, sir,' says Cobbs, 'there really is Love Lane. And a pleasant walk it is, and proud shall I be to show it to yourself and Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior.'

'Norah dear,' said Master Harry, 'this is curious. We really ought to see Love Lane. Put on your bonnet, my sweetest darling, and we will go there with Cobbs.'

Boots leaves me to judge what a beast he felt himself to be, when that young pair told him, as they all three jogged along together, that they had made up their minds to give him two thousand guineas a year as head gardener, on accounts of his being so true a friend to 'em. Boots could have wished at that moment that the earth would have opened and swallowed him up, he felt so mean, with their beaming eyes a-looking at him and believing him. Well, sir, he turned the conversation as well as he could, and he took 'em down Love Lane to the water-meadows, and there Master Harry would have drowned himself in half a moment more, a-getting out a water-lily for her—but nothing daunted that boy. Well, sir, they was tired out. All being so new and strange to 'em, they was tired as tired could be. And they laid down on a bank of daisies, like the children in the wood—leastways, meadows—and fell asleep.

Boots don't know—perhaps I do—but never mind, it don't signify either way—why it made a man fit to make a fool of himself to see them two pretty babies a-lying there in the clear still sunny day, not dreaming half so hard when they was asleep as they done when they was awake. But, there, when you come to think of yourself, you know, and what a game you have been up to ever since you was in your own cradle, and what a poor sort of a chap you are, and how it's always either yesterday with you, or else to-morrow, and never to-day, that's where it is !

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Well, sir, they woke up at last, and then one thing was getting pretty clear to boots—namely, that Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior's, temper was on the move. When Master Harry took her round the waist, she said he 'teased her so'; and when he says, 'Norah, my young May moon, your Harry tease you?' she tells him, 'Yes; and I want to go home!'

A biled fowl and baked bread-and-butter pudding brought Mrs. Walmers up a little; but boots could have wished, he must privately own to me, to have seen her more sensible of the voice of love, and less abandoning of herself to currants. However, Master Harry, he kept up, and his noble heart was as fond as ever. Mrs. Walmers turned very sleepy about dusk, and began to cry. Therefore, Mrs. Walmers went off to bed as per yesterday; and Master Harry ditto repeated.

About eleven or twelve at night comes back the governor in a chaise, along with Mr. Walmers and a elderly lady. Mr. Walmers looks amused and very serious, both at once, and says to our missis, 'We are much indebted to you, ma'am, for your kind care of our little children, which we can never sufficiently acknowledge. Pray, ma'am, where is my boy?' Our missis says, 'Cobbs has the dear child in charge, sir. Cobbs, show forty!' Then he says to Cobbs, 'Ah, Cobbs, I am glad to see *you*! I understood you was here!' And Cobbs says, 'Yes, sir. Your most obedient, sir.'

I may be surprised to hear boots say it, perhaps; but boots assures me that his heart beat like a hammer, going upstairs. 'I beg your pardon, sir,' says he, while unlocking the door; 'I hope you are not angry with Master Harry. For Master Harry is a fine boy, sir, and will do you credit and honour.' And boots signifies to me that if the fine boy's father had contradicted him in the daring

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state of mind in which he then was, he thinks he should have 'fetched him a crack,' and taken the consequences.

But Mr. Walmers only says, 'No, Cobbs. No, my good fellow. Thank you!' And, the door being opened, he goes in.

Boots goes in too, holding the light, and he sees Mr. Walmers go up to the bedside, bend gently down, and kiss the little sleeping face. Then he stands looking at it for a minute, looking wonderfully like it (they do say he ran away with Mrs. Walmers) ; and then he gently shakes the little shoulder.

'Harry, my dear boy! Harry!'

Master Harry starts up and looks at him—looks at Cobbs too. Such is the honour of that mite, that he looks at Cobbs, to see whether he has brought him into trouble.

'I am not angry, my child. I only want you to dress yourself and come home.'

'Yes, father.'

Master Harry dresses himself quickly. His breast begins to swell when he has nearly finished, and it swells more and more as he stands, at last, a-looking at his father: his father standing a-looking at him, the quiet image of him.

'Please may I'—the spirit of that little creature, and the way he kept his rising tears down!—'please, dear father—may I—kiss Norah before I go?'

'You may, my child.'

So he takes Master Harry in his hand, and boots leads the way with the candle, and they come to that other bedroom, where the elderly lady is seated by the bed, and poor little Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior, is fast asleep. There the father lifts the child up to the pillow, and he lays his little face down for an instant by the little warm

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face of poor unconscious little Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior, and gently draws it to him—a sight so touching to the chambermaids who are peeping through the door that one of them calls out, ‘It’s a shame to part ’em!’ But this chambermaid was always, as boots informs me, a soft-hearted one. Not that there was any harm in that girl. Far from it.

Finally, boots says, that’s all about it. Mr. Walmers drove away in the chaise, having hold of Master Harry’s hand. The elderly lady and Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior, that was never to be, went off next day.

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Chapter I

The Death of Mr. Thomas



LONG procession assembled itself in front of a house in one of the principal streets in Bordeaux. It was the hour at which the master of that mansion was to be transported to the last home that should ever shelter his earthly remains.

The coffin, with its sombre velvet pall, was borne by the friends of the deceased. Immediately after them walked a tall and extremely pale young man, who was followed by a crowd of persons apparently but little impressed by the solemnity of the moment. At some distance behind the procession a child, about twelve years of age, running with feeble and irregular steps, vainly endeavoured to keep up with the rest of the people. Not one of that long train paid the least attention to him, although he was weeping so violently that even the long bright ringlets that fell in golden showers about his sickly countenance were profusely moistened with his tears.

The burial-ground was soon reached, and the usual ceremonies performed. The clergyman, in making a short, eulogistic discourse, pronounced Mr. Thomas (who

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had been a wealthy merchant) to have lived a most righteous and praiseworthy life, and faithfully to have discharged the duties of a good son, husband, and father. The last short prayer was uttered, and the crowd withdrew. The weeping child alone remained beside the grave ; and, kneeling on the moist earth, he exclaimed with emotion : ‘ Uncle ! dear uncle ! shall I never see you again ? ’

‘ Are you not going away with the rest of them, my little friend ? ’ said the sexton, kindly touching the child on the shoulder.

The boy looked up without replying.

‘ Is it your father, my dear, who has just been buried ? ’

‘ No, sir ; it was my uncle—my dear uncle ! ’

‘ But you have a father ? ’

‘ No, sir ; he was dead before I can remember. ’

‘ And your mother ? ’

‘ She is dead, too. ’

‘ But you remember her, do you not ? ’

‘ No, sir ; I was so very little when she died, ’ replied the child. ‘ I only remember a large white bed on which she was lying, and my uncle—my good uncle—standing beside the bed, holding my mother’s hand. And then he said he would take care of little Cecil—Cecil, that is I, you know. Then he took me home, and I lived with him ; but I never saw my dear mother again. ’

‘ And you, I suppose, are your uncle’s heir ? ’ asked the sexton.

‘ What is *an heir* ? ’ inquired Cecil.

‘ I mean everything which was your uncle’s now belongs to you ? ’

‘ To me ? Yes, but to his son also. ’

‘ Ah ! Then he has a son ? ’

‘ Yes. Did you not see him ? ’

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‘ Now I remember that I did. He is a tall young man, is he not, with a dark skin, but very pale ? He told me to call upon him to-morrow with my account. He did not look very amiable, that cousin of yours ; and I am sure he shed no tears.’

‘ Oh, that is because he is too big to cry. Only children cry,’ replied Cecil, wiping his own eyes. ‘ My cousin is a *man*. He has travelled all over the world—he has been to Paris with my uncle, and he stayed there three months, and—but how dark it is getting ! I must go home, or Augustus will be angry with me.’

‘ Who is Augustus, my dear ?’

‘ My cousin, sir ; and my poor uncle said that now he was to be my father and my uncle too.’

‘ Poor child !’ exclaimed the sexton, as Cecil hastened from him, but paused when he had retreated a few steps to take one more farewell of his uncle’s grave. ‘ Poor child ! I do not much admire this new protector of yours.’

Chapter II

The Heir and the Orphan

As the churchyard was situated at some distance from the house which had belonged to Mr. Thomas, it was quite dark before Cecil reached his home. His first inquiry was after his cousin.

‘ He has retired to the chamber of our deceased master,’ replied one of the domestics ; ‘ and he gave orders that nobody should disturb him.’

‘ Then good-night, John,’ said Cecil, taking up a candle. ‘ I am going to bed—going to bed without kissing my uncle for good-night ! Oh, John, I cannot bear to think of that !’

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‘What can you expect, Master Cecil?’ said the ancient domestic, brushing the cuff of his coat over his eyes. ‘We must all die. It is very hard for you—this great affliction—but, then, you have a cousin left. Humph! a cousin! Poor child! You won’t find that *much*,’ muttered John between his teeth.

Cecil, as he was retiring to his chamber, was forced to pass the door of his uncle’s room. He could not help pausing, and he perceived a light gleaming through the crevices of the door.

‘Augustus is there,’ said he to himself, ‘and no doubt weeping. Oh! it would be some consolation if I could see even *him*.’ With this reflection he tapped gently at the door.

‘Who is there?’ demanded a rough voice.

‘It is I, cousin—I, *Cecil*. Pray let me in.’

‘Leave me alone, and go to bed!’ replied Augustus authoritatively.

The next morning when Cecil came downstairs he found Augustus finishing his breakfast.

‘You did not wait for me,’ said Cecil timidly.

‘Do you suppose I am made to wait?’ replied Augustus rudely.

Cecil seated himself at table and rang the little bell that stood beside his plate.

‘Why did you ring?’ demanded Augustus.

‘For my breakfast. There is nothing left,’ said Cecil, surveying the empty table.

A servant entered. Augustus addressed him before Cecil could speak. ‘Let this child eat in the kitchen; and remember that in future you receive orders from *me* alone.’

‘In the kitchen! What does that mean?’ questioned Cecil in surprise.

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‘ It means that I am master here—the *only* master—and that *you*—you are nobody !’ answered Augustus.

‘ I ! Am I not your cousin ?’ said Cecil innocently, and as though he feared he should receive a reply in the negative.

‘ Listen to me, Master Cecil. You are twelve years old, and ought to understand me. Your father died and left nothing, so did your mother ; therefore *you* have nothing !’

‘ But *you* are rich, cousin. You have money enough for both ?’

‘ You will find yourself much mistaken, my young gentleman. I have money for myself, but none for you. Do you hear ?’

‘ Now you are joking with me, cousin. Do you mean that at this table there will no longer be a seat for me—that I shall not have a room in this house ?’

‘ The house is mine, Master Cecil. You should think me very good to argue thus with a mere child ; but I wish you to understand that my father, when *he* was master, bid what he pleased, and therefore *he* chose you to remain here. Now that *I* am master, I do what *I* please, and I choose you to find some other home.’

‘ Some other home ! Where can I go ? Where would you have me go ?’

‘ Where you please—I care not where !’

Cecil burst into tears, and, approaching his cousin with clasped hands, said tremblingly : ‘ Oh, where *can* I go, dear cousin ? What will become of me ? I am such a mere child, as you said, and so feeble—so often sick ! I should die of hunger if you turned me away. And what would people say of you, if you let your poor little cousin die in the streets ? Why, the very boys would throw stones at you as you passed along !’

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Whether it was owing to this very natural remark of his cousin's, or some better feeling that at that moment inspired him, we cannot say, but Augustus remained silent and lost in thought for some time. At length he looked at Cecil, and said with affected kindness :

' You are right, Cecil ; you ought not to leave my protection. To-morrow I am going to Paris, and you shall go with me.'

' What ! to Paris ? I shall see Paris—I ?'

' Yes, Cecil—that is, if you are a very good boy.'

' Oh, dear, good Augustus ! How kind you are ! You were only playing with me just now, were you not ?' And Cecil approached his cousin with open arms, and would have embraced him, but Augustus pushed him away, although not angrily, and said :

' Very good, very good. Now send for your breakfast.'

' Oh, I am not at all hungry,' replied Cecil, shaking his head mournfully. ' I could not eat now, my heart is too full.'

' Then eat when you please,' replied Augustus, as he rose and left the room.

Chapter III

The Tuileries

ON the first of August, in the year 18—, a dark-looking young man and a fair and delicate child alighted from a diligence at the usual stopping-place in Paris.

' Oh, how tired I am, Augustus !' said the child to the young man. ' I have not slept for the last three nights.'

' Wait here until I come back,' said Augustus ; and

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he entered the office and demanded of the clerk : ' At what hour does the diligence leave for Bordeaux ? '

' At six o'clock, sir.'

' Is there a vacant seat ? '

' Yes, sir ; there is one.'

' Reserve it for me.'

' For whom, cousin ? ' exclaimed Cecil, who had followed Augustus unperceived.

' That does not concern you,' replied Augustus, much provoked at finding his cousin so near him. He placed the money for the seat on the desk and received in exchange a small piece of paper. Then, taking Cecil by the hand, he said :

' Come along ;' and they went on their way.

' Where are we going ? ' asked Cecil.

' To the Tuileries, to set my watch,' replied Augustus.

' Oh ! I remember when my poor uncle used to tell me about his travels he said the first thing he always did on arriving in Paris was to go to the Tuileries, to regulate his watch. Poor uncle ! I can never think of him without crying.'

' Be quiet, will you ! ' said Augustus roughly, taking Cecil's hand as he was wiping away his tears. The child was frightened at the harsh tone of his cousin, but soon became distracted by the numerous and magnificent shops they passed, and said in astonishment to himself, ' What a beautiful and splendid city Paris is ! '

The two travellers arrived at the Tuileries just as the gates were thrown open. Nobody was yet promenading there, and Augustus led Cecil to one of the most retired walks, and made him sit down beneath a chestnut-tree, the thick foliage of which shaded them from the sun.

' Are you hungry ? ' he inquired.

' Yes,' replied Cecil.

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‘ Eat then,’ said Augustus, handing him a couple of pears from his pocket and a small piece of bread.

‘ Are we going to stay here long ?’ asked Cecil while he was eating.

‘ Are you not satisfied here ?’ returned his cousin.

‘ Perfectly so, Augustus ; but, to tell the truth, I am more sleepy than hungry.’

And in a few minutes Cecil’s eyes half closed, and his lovely head fell first on one side, then on the other. The quiet of this beautiful garden, the delightful shades, the clear basins of water in which white swans and golden fish were playing, all appeared to invite repose.

‘ It is easy to gratify you,’ said Augustus. ‘ You could not have a more beautiful place in which to rest than this. Lie down and sleep.’

‘ And what will you do meanwhile ?’ asked Cecil.

‘ Oh,’ said Augustus, evidently embarrassed, ‘ I have my portable writing-desk in my pocket, and I will amuse myself by taking notes. But what book is that you are putting under your head for a pillow ?’

‘ It is “ Robinson Crusoe,” my poor uncle’s last gift. Have you read it, Augustus ?’

‘ No. Go to sleep !’ said Augustus roughly.

Cecil replied, opening the book : ‘ It is the history of a poor forsaken child on a desert island. Read it, Augustus, while I sleep. It will amuse you.’

‘ No—yes,’ said Augustus, taking the book from Cecil, and again repeating, ‘ go to sleep.’

He glanced over the book.

‘ Read—read it. It will interest you,’ repeated Cecil, yawning and rubbing his eyes. ‘ Poor Robinson ! Imagine, Augustus, a child about my age, or a little older, I believe, alone—entirely alone—on a desert island. But the desert island was not so fearful as the

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mere fact of his being alone. By-the-by, Augustus,' added Cecil laughingly, 'do not run away from me while I am asleep, for I should not care to be in Robinson's plight—I! A funny idea, is it not?'

And half laughing, half yawning, Cecil fell instantly into a sweet slumber. With a constrained effort, avoiding to glance at his little cousin, Augustus took a portfolio of paper from his packet, and making the 'Life of Robinson Crusoe' serve as a desk, began to write.

Chapter IV

The Awakening of Cecil

THE sun was setting when Cecil awoke. The first sound that struck his ear was the palace clock. He counted seven.

'Seven o'clock!' exclaimed he, complacently stretching his arms. 'I have had a good sleep'; and, slowly opening his eyes, he looked around in astonishment.

He had forgotten his journey—his arrival. Everything around him appeared strange; but presently he recovered himself. 'Oh, I am in Paris—Augustus!'

Not seeing his cousin where he had left him, he started up to seek him.

'Why, where can he be? That is a good joke! He has hidden himself to frighten me'; and, with the happy thoughtlessness of his age, he unconcernedly amused himself in looking at the objects around.

The garden was hardly less quiet than before he fell asleep. A few persons were still walking about, and some sitting on the chairs.

Cecil waited patiently until he heard the clock strike half-past seven; then, seeing that his cousin had not



The sun was setting
when Cecil awoke

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come, he began to walk up and down, without yet being the least suspicious.

‘ I have slept twelve hours,’ thought he, counting with his fingers. ‘ Augustus must have been weary, and has gone somewhere else.’

Cecil’s heart was full of fear and trouble.

‘ Oh,’ said he, with a mournful look, and without noticing that a crowd of richly dressed people were assembling in the gardens, ‘ if my cousin does not return—if he has lost his way, what will become of me ? Where shall I go ? And, then, I am hungry ! I shall die of hunger ! But Augustus *will* return. If he gets astray he can inquire the road. He knows I will be lost without him. If I were not so hungry I could wait patiently. Perhaps if I read, the time will not appear so long.’

Then, sighing deeply, Cecil took up his book ; but what was his astonishment when a letter fell out of it ! He picked it up, and discovered that it was addressed to himself.

‘ This is curious,’ said he.

He opened the letter, and read as follows :

‘ MY DEAR COUSIN,

‘ I am not rich enough to support you, and I am too young to undertake so great a responsibility as that of bringing up such a little boy as you are—besides, you have no claim upon me. On the contrary, you are indebted to me for the little education you have received, for the clothes you have on your back, and for your food until now.

‘ But I do not reproach you for all this ; only leave me to myself for the future. Live as you best can, and forget that you have a cousin in the world. Paris is not the desert island you talked about a little while ago ;

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it is a large city, full of resources. You know how to read, write, and calculate a little, and with these acquirements you can get along.

‘ Farewell, Cecil. Do not seek me, for when you receive this letter I shall already be far away from Paris. Do not attempt to return to my house ; it will be useless. I am master there, and I have a right to receive whoever pleases me, or to remove whoever displeases me. It is clear I do not want you ; therefore do not come.

‘ It is needless for me to sign this letter ; you will easily guess the writer. Act as if I were dead, and never inquire after me. Farewell for ever !’

Chapter V

The Wounded Little Dog

WHEN Cecil had finished reading he remained for some moments like one petrified. Then he took up the letter again, reperused it with great care, pondering over every sentence, and seemed not to be able to comprehend that he was really forsaken. But when he came to the last words, ‘ Farewell for ever,’ he repeated them several times to himself, then suddenly burst into tears.

Just then a dog, covered with blood, and moaning piteously, ran towards Cecil, and sought shelter between his legs.

‘ Get away from me,’ said Cecil, angrily pushing him with his foot ; but immediately his conscience reproached him. ‘ I want God to have pity on me, and I have no pity upon a poor beast ’ ; and he took the dog in his arms and caressed it.

‘ Oh, it is your dog, little boy, is it ?’ said an old gentleman passing by. ‘ Keep him with you, then, if you do

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not wish him to be killed. He has just escaped from great danger. Poor animal ! At every stroke of the bayonet, with which the sentinel was endeavouring to chase him out of the garden, I thought he would die ; but he recovered himself bravely, and sprang across the iron railing on the terrace. I advise you, my little friend, to fasten a string around his neck if you wish to keep them from killing him.'

' But this dog is not mine, sir. I do not know to whom he belongs,' replied Cecil. ' He is wounded, and you ought to take him to your house, for *you*, doubtless, have a home ?'

' Well, that's a good one !' said the old gentleman, laughing. ' Certainly, I have a home, but I do not like dogs. They distress and annoy me ; they must always be watched. If you do not love them better than I do, my little fellow, why, all you have to do is to let this one go and take his chance. His trouble will soon be ended. If he escapes from the sentinel's bayonet, he will not from the poisonous little balls of meat which they throw into the streets for vagrant dogs. That is a good one—take him home with me ! Children think everybody will do just as they wish,' muttered the old gentleman as he went on his way.

' He is a selfish old man,' said Cecil, caressing the dog, who gave utterance to a sort of doleful, whining sound. ' Poor animal ! His foot is hurt. A blow from the bayonet has torn off the skin, and the bone is exposed.'

Cecil's thoughts were now entirely occupied with the poor dog, who had run to him for protection. He carried his little burden to a clear basin of water, and after having carefully washed the wound, he tore off the corner of his pocket-handkerchief and bound it up. The dog licked his hands and looked up to him with an expression of so

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much gratitude that Cecil experienced a sweet satisfaction in having done a good act. The old gentleman's advice to fasten a string to the animal now recurred to Cecil, and he took the rest of his pocket-handkerchief and put it around the dog's neck.

Though Cecil was twelve years old, he was so small and delicate that he looked at least two or three years younger. His countenance was pale and sickly-looking; his features were fine and intellectual; his mouth rather scornful; but in his face might be read the most exquisite sensibility, the most tender and elevated feelings. His eyes were of a clear blue, with a sad and softly insinuating expression; his dress was neat, and even elegant; his little plaited shirt was trimmed with lace; a silk handkerchief was tied around his neck; his pantaloons were of nankin, his coat of fine blue cloth; and his feet were neatly dressed with nice and glazed shoes. He had the appearance of a rich child, who was waiting for his father or mother, from whom he had only strayed for a moment.

The dog was a little black spaniel with one white spot upon his breast, one on each foot, and at the end of his tail. His hair was long and silky, and his ears so long that they almost swept the ground.

Cecil and his dog were still gazing at each other, when the beating of the drums made them start.

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Chapter VI

A Pennyworth of Bread

It was the signal for closing the gates. 'I will have courage,' said Cecil to himself while walking along. 'I am better off than Robinson Crusoe. There was nothing in his desert island; but here there is everything,' added he, going down the Rue de la Paix, and gazing in astonishment at the windows of the beautiful and brilliantly lighted shops—'everything,' repeated he. 'If the deserted island on which Robinson was cast had been thus provided, truly such a large volume would not have been made of his misfortunes. But I forgot that I was hungry, and have only eaten a small piece of bread and two pears this morning.'

Just at this moment he passed by an eating-house, but he did not think of going in. Brought up in the country where the customs were plain and old-fashioned, he had only heard the Parisian eating-houses spoken of as places where several persons met to dine together and make merry. He was sad and lonely, and anything like gaiety for the present had no attraction for him, so he walked on. Next he came to a large hotel, the door of which was open. He stopped before it, and looked wistfully into the courtyard.

'If they see me, probably they will ask me to come in,' he said; and unconsciously he advanced a few steps.

Servants were running backwards and forwards, some carrying dishes towards the steps; others were currying horses and harnessing them to the waggons; but nobody noticed Cecil—nobody asked him to come in. In his artlessness and ignorance of the world, he was astonished. Then, supposing that this neglect only arose from their

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not perceiving him, he walked a few steps farther inside the courtyard.

An old woman, who was standing before a door above which was written, 'Inquire of the doorkeeper,' cried out to him :

'For whom are you looking, my little gentleman?'

'Nobody, my good woman,' replied Cecil, delighted to have somebody notice him, and he walked directly up to her.

'What do you want, then, and why do you come in?' continued the woman, so sharply that the poor child stumbled in retreating. But he quickly recovered himself and took courage to say :

'I thought, seeing me there, you would invite me to come in, madame.'

The woman opened her eyes and stared at the child as if she did not understand what he said. Cecil continued :

'You see, madame, that I am very tired and hungry.'

'Our house is not a public inn for travellers. Go further on, my little one—go! I tell you this is not the place you seek!' and the woman accompanied her words with many gestures; but seeing that Cecil did not hasten to obey her, she took him by the shoulders and pushed him with great violence.

'Oh,' said he, turning down the first street he came to, 'what a rude woman!' and, walking on, he arrived at a baker's shop.

'They will surely give me a piece of bread here,' thought he, entering. A young girl was seated behind the counter.

'Miss,' said he hesitatingly—for the doorkeeper's behaviour had made him mistrustful—'will you give me a piece of bread?'

'With pleasure, my little gentleman,' said the girl, rising quickly; and, taking down a large loaf, she added,

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smiling kindly : ' But before I cut it, tell me how much do you want ?'

' How much ? That is as you please, miss,' replied Cecil gaily, and almost devouring the bread, of which he was so much in need, with his eyes.

' Forsooth ! that is all the same to me, my little gentleman,' replied the girl. ' Do you wish a penny or twopence worth ?'

' Do you mean to make me *pay* for it ?' inquired the child, with such ludicrous earnestness that the girl burst out laughing.

' Do you suppose that I am going to give it to you for nothing ?'

' Amanda !' screamed a loud voice from behind a grating, where Cecil perceived a fat woman writing in a large account-book. ' Why do you amuse yourself in that manner with customers, instead of helping them immediately to what they want ? Cut a pennyworth of bread for the child, and if that is not enough, cut him twopence worth.'

The girl obeyed. ' Here is a pennyworth,' she said, presenting him with the bread with one hand and holding out the other for the money.

Cecil felt in his pocket, and blushed as he drew out only one halfpenny. It was all he had in the world.

' That is all I have,' he said tremblingly, his eyes filling with tears, and glancing at the bread, which was not sufficient to satisfy his appetite, and which he dreaded to see cut in two.

' There, take it,' said the amiable girl, giving him the whole piece.

The poor child seized the bread, and, seating himself on the side-walk near the baker's shop, for he had not strength to go farther, he began to eat with great eagerness.

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Chapter VII

A Name for the Dog

CECIL was still eating, when, by the reflection of the lamps from the shop, he noticed the dog, who was looking up to him in a most expressive manner. At every mouthful he swallowed the dog would wag his tail, and draw nearer to his new master ; then, seeing there was nothing for him, he would sit down again on his hind-legs, and, with his tongue hanging out of his mouth, look so disappointed that Cecil was moved, and exclaimed :

‘ Poor animal ! He is hungry also. I have not too much for myself, but no matter, we will share it. I have suffered enough from hunger to-day not to have pity on others.’ And after this reflection, with every mouthful Cecil ate himself, he gave one to the dog. The poor animal expressed his delight by jumping, wagging his tail, and crouching at the feet of his new master ; then, standing on his hind-legs, his fore-feet elevated, he appeared ready to dance the Cachucha.

Cecil encouraged him, and said : ‘ Give me your hand.’

The dog obeyed, first presenting one paw, then the other, with such grace that Cecil was enchanted.

‘ What shall I call you ?’ said Cecil.

But the dog could not answer ; and he recommenced his tricks, barking, turning around, and alternately presenting his paws and withdrawing them.

‘ I wish very much to know your name, my poor friend,’ said Cecil, again speaking to the dog as if he could understand him ; ‘ for you are now my only companion—my companion in misfortune ; both of us wanderers in this great city of Paris, as Robinson was on his desert island. I am Robinson, and you are my man Friday. You are

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black, like him ; but he could speak, and you cannot say a word. Let me see ; will you answer to the name of Friday ? No ; you do not understand me. That is a pity ; for, besides you, I have nobody here to whom I can talk. Let us find a name for you ; that will make me forget my grief.' And with the versatility of spirit natural to children of his age, Cecil tried to recall all the names of dogs he had ever heard. Then he pronounced them one by one distinctly, all the while watching for the slightest sign or movement of the dog's ears which might express recognition.

The first name he thought of was Valiant, implying, no doubt, that the dog was courageous in fighting the wolves, which were very numerous in the woods surrounding Bordeaux. He repeated ' Valiant ! Valiant ! ' several times, varying the tone of his voice, but the spaniel took no notice.

The dog of Bordeaux being uppermost in his mind, he called in succession : ' Diana ! Castor ! Pollux ! Beauty ! Turk ! Cæsar ! ' But none of these names appeared to belong to the little spaniel.

At this moment a gentleman, in a blue great-coat and a three-cornered hat, passed by Cecil, whistling to a large greyhound, which he called *Fox*.

The spaniel made one bound as if to run towards the gentleman, but immediately returned and crouched down at Cecil's feet with a joyful whine.

' Oh ! Your name is *Fox* ? ' exclaimed Cecil with pleasure.

The dog wagged his tail in token of assent.

' Well, *Fox*,' added he, ' we have supped, but we have had nothing to drink, and I am very thirsty. Are you thirsty ? '

The dog, as if he understood, ran down a street, con-

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tinually looking back to see if his master followed. The gentleman in the blue great-coat walked slowly behind them.

Fox conducted Cecil in this manner to a place where several streets crossed, in the middle of which rose a beautiful fountain. Fox drank out of the basin, and Cecil from one of the spouts.

‘Thank you,’ said Cecil; ‘I gave you bread, and you have given me water, so we are quits. Now we will remain here and sleep, for I am weary.’

Cecil had laid himself down upon the ground, when the gentleman in the great-coat, who had lost sight of him for a moment, approached, and said :

‘What are you doing there, all alone, and at this hour? Do you know that it is late, my little friend?’

‘You see, sir, that I am playing with my dog,’ replied Cecil, without moving.

‘I thought you were a lost child,’ said the stranger, ‘but I perceive by your dress that I must be mistaken.’

Cecil, at the word *lost*, started involuntarily, and yet refrained from making any exclamation. When the gentleman had ceased speaking, the child asked, with an air which might have been taken for one of curiosity, but which was really one of anxiety :

‘Well! and if I had been a lost child, what would you have done, sir?’

‘I should have asked you where you lived, and taken you home.’

‘You are very good, then,’ said Cecil, rising and approaching his interrogator.

‘It is my business to take care of lost children.’

‘Your business is to take home all the children who lose their way. What do you call yourself?’ exclaimed Cecil.

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‘ I am the Town Crier.’

‘ Town Crier !’ repeated Cecil. ‘ But I thought, sir, that some of these poor children had no homes.’

‘ Then,’ said the Town Crier, who was amused by Cecil’s prattling, ‘ as all children without homes are beggars or vagrants, I take them to prison.’

‘ But could there not be some children who had no homes, and yet were neither beggars nor vagrants, sir ?— if, for example, a little boy were lost by his big cousin, who wished to get rid of him ?’ inquired Cecil, a little agitated.

The Town Crier smiled, and replied : ‘ Then the big cousin must have been a very bad cousin.’

‘ But what if it was so, sir ?’

‘ I should take the little cousin to prison, because nobody is permitted to sleep in the streets ; but the prison is neither very dark nor very gloomy. Then the little cousin would be questioned. If he had parents, they would be written to, and asked if they would own him ; if his parents would not own him, the child would be placed in a house, where very good care would be taken of him, and he would be taught a trade.’

‘ Would it not be like a prison there ?’ asked Cecil.

‘ Not at all, my little friend. At first he could not go out ; he would not be free to do as he chose ; and a little boy like you would not be allowed to have such a pretty dog for a companion.’

Cecil thought a moment, then said :

‘ It is not permitted to sleep in the streets !’ as if this had particularly struck him. ‘ Well, that is strange ! Poor forsaken Robinson, on his desert island, had at least this liberty. I thank you, sir, and bid you good-evening,’ added he, taking his dog under his arm, and walking away from the Town Crier.

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‘No doubt,’ thought Cecil, ‘there are other privileges in Paris for deserted children which should compensate for not being able to sleep in the streets. But I at least am a hundred times more perplexed here than ever was Robinson Crusoe. Where shall I sleep? All the doors are closed, and if I knock I shall perhaps be as badly treated as I was by the doorkeeper of the hotel near the Tuileries; and I do not like to be insulted. If I could find a deserted house, it would suit me admirably, and Fox also; would it not, my little dog?’

Cecil looked up to see whither he had strayed. He perceived on his right two unfinished houses, and a scaffolding in front of them, before which a small lamp was burning that emitted a black and disagreeable smoke.

‘Here is the place for us!’ exclaimed he joyfully. ‘Two houses without doors or windows, and probably no tenants—nobody to speak to us or refuse us admittance. Come, let us go in.’

But the poor child was deceived, for he had hardly advanced two steps under the scaffolding when an enraged voice screamed out:

‘Who is there?’

Fox answered by growling.

Chapter VIII

Father La Tuile

‘THERE is, then, somebody here,’ added the voice, which was followed by the sound of an approaching crutch; and, in a moment, a cripple, dressed in uniform, stood before Cecil. ‘It was you, you little urchin, making all that noise, was it? demanded the old soldier.

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‘ I did not think I made much noise,’ said Cecil sorrowfully.

‘ If it was not you, it was your dog, then, that awoke me from my sleep. One cannot sleep quietly for a single hour in this street.’

‘ Oh, if you can sleep at all, you are very fortunate,’ exclaimed Cecil.

‘ But I tell you I cannot sleep. You see very well that I cannot sleep, you little monkey ! If I had a dog like yours, I might sleep, for he would keep watch for me ; but the street-sweepers poisoned mine last week—my poor Austerlitz ! I had forgotten to muzzle him, and in his old age he had grown greedy. I warned him repeatedly not to touch the little meat-balls thrown about the streets, but I might as well have talked to my wooden leg. He did not heed me. He saw one of the poisoned balls in his way, and tasted it. Poor Austerlitz ! he came and died in my arms ! He was my friend—my only friend. We met each other, both wounded, in the battle after which I named him. I bound up his wounds ; he licked mine ; and from that time we have, as the song says, “ together glided down the stream of life,” until last Friday afternoon, at half-past three o’clock, when Austerlitz died. Will you sell me your dog, my little monkey—or give it to me, rather ? for it would be difficult to pay for it, as you see my purse is at present empty. But give him to me ; it will afford me much pleasure. I will call him Austerlitz, and even a dog should be proud of that glorious name. What do you say ?’

‘ I say, sir, that I will make you a proposition : this dog is not mine, and I can neither give nor sell him to you ; but if you will let him and me sleep here with you, we will both keep watch.’

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‘That will do, my fine little boy—that will do. Come in. The sleeping apartment is fresh and clean; the four walls will serve for bed-curtains, and heaven for the ceiling. The bed is not to be despised: it is of granite, which is very costly. Everything is elegant, and has never been used. We may not always have such good accommodation. Have you supped? Are you thirsty? Are you hungry?’

‘Alas!’ said Cecil, ashamed of his distressed situation, ‘since this morning I have only eaten a little bread.’

‘Poor child!’ said the old soldier kindly. ‘There, take the remainder of this cold veal, which was given to me by a charming little girl who lives just by here; and there is some bread. But, bless me! when I have wine I can never leave a drop; it is a habit I got into in the wars. If you want some water, I believe there is some in the pitcher—I say *believe*, for, except to wash my hands and moustaches, I never make use of the pure element. Thunder and lightning! How the little monkey devours everything!’

‘Did you wish to save some for to-morrow?’ interrupted Cecil, colouring at the remark, and suddenly ceasing to eat.

‘Save some for to-morrow! Nonsense! Eat away, my young hero! Old Father La Tuile is not sufficiently sure of ever seeing to-morrow to lay up anything for the future. Son of a soldier, and born on the day of a battle, I have grown up in the midst of battles, doubting every day whether the next would not be my last. This leg has made me a half-pay officer, and I am now numbered among the King’s invalids. By-the-by, little monkey, I am talking away like an old magpie, without inquiring how such a nicely dressed and genteel little boy as you are happens to be wandering about the streets of Paris dying of hunger, and without a home?’



Come in

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Cecil was preparing to gratify the old man's curiosity, when a second thought made him change his mind, and he said :

‘ I cannot tell you about it, sir ; it is too horrible.’

‘ Can it be possible that you have done something horrible, with that sweet and sinless face ?’ exclaimed Father La Tuile.

‘ It was not I who did something horrible, sir ; it was my cousin. My cousin is the son of my dead uncle, who was the best man on earth ; and it would have grieved him so much if he knew that I told anybody of his son's wickedness. It is on that account that I cannot tell you about it, sir.’

‘ If they did not tell us our duty more clearly in the regiment than you have related the history of your cousin, there would be few soldiers capable of fulfilling their trust. But sleep will do you good, so good-night.’

Saying these words, the cripple went behind a little tent, ingeniously formed of linen, suspended on the beams of the unfinished house. Cecil laid himself on a bundle of hay, with Fox at his feet. A few minutes afterwards Cecil's troubles were lost in the sweet and refreshing slumber which visits the pillow of youth and innocence.

Chapter IX

The Workmen

CECIL was awakened at daybreak by his dog's loud barking ; and, starting up, he beheld Fox looking half threateningly, half fearfully, at a crowd of workmen.

‘ Here, Father La Tuile,’ screamed one of the workmen, ‘ what does all this mean ? Who are these new tenants,

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who cannot wait until a house is finished before they come to occupy it ?

‘ Well, what is the matter ? ’ said Father La Tuile, raising the cloth of his tent a little, and looking towards Cecil, who still lay on his straw bed. ‘ These new tenants ! I gave them shelter, and where was the harm ? ’

‘ There is no harm, Father La Tuile—no harm at all,’ replied the workman who had before spoken, and who appeared to be the foreman. ‘ But allow me to say, notwithstanding, Father La Tuile, that, instead of giving shelter to this little rogue, you might better have taken him back to his parents, who must be very uneasy on his account.’

‘ I have no parents, Mr. Workman,’ said Cecil, rising and shaking off the bits of straw from his hair.

‘ No father nor mother ? ’ inquired the foreman.

‘ I only had an uncle, and he is dead, sir,’ said Cecil, wiping away a tear which rolled down his cheek.

‘ No father and no mother ! ’ exclaimed all the masons, surrounding the little deserted child ; ‘ and no home, and you do not know where to sleep at night ? Where did your uncle live ? What did he do ? Did he not leave any property ? ’

These questions followed one another in such rapid succession that Cecil had no opportunity to reply. Father La Tuile interrupted them all with his favourite exclamation :

‘ Thunder and lightning ! ’ If you ask so many questions at once, how do you expect the boy to answer them ? Now, listen, comrades, to his story.’

Cecil, who during all these questions had appeared bewildered, now spoke :

‘ I was born in Bordeaux. I arrived in Paris yesterday

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morning. An hour afterwards I was alone. Now I am a poor, forsaken child. This is my history.'

'Forsaken! By whom?' asked all the masons at once.

'I cannot tell you that, gentlemen, for it would do him injury. If you should meet him in the street, you would throw stones at him; and, besides, it would pain his father very much, who was so good, and who is now in heaven. No, I cannot tell you.'

'Well, this is a strange child,' said all the men, looking at one another; 'he has been ill-treated and abandoned, and he will not tell by whom.'

'Oh,' said one of the workmen, 'it is because he has nothing to tell. He is a little rogue who has run away from his parents.'

¶ 'And why should I have run away from my parents?' asked Cecil, the blood mounting to his cheeks.

'Because you did something naughty, and were afraid of being whipped.'

'I wish that were the truth,' said Cecil. 'Yes, I wish it were so. I would much rather have a home to go to, with the chance of getting a whipping as soon as I entered the house, than not to have a home at all.'

'Then why will you not tell the truth?'

'Listen,' said Cecil, who, indignant at being misjudged, had become quite energetic. 'If you, or you, or you, sir, had a brother, a cousin, or any relation who had done a wicked action, you would not tell of it, would you?'

'No,' they all answered; 'but we would punish him for it.'

'Very well. I cannot punish him, because I am smaller than he, and, besides, he is far away; but, notwithstanding all that, I am his victim.'

'What can we do for him?' consulted the men together.

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‘ He probably does not know where to get any breakfast this morning.’

‘ That is very true,’ said Cecil.

‘ For his breakfast this morning, comrades,’ said one of the workmen to the others, ‘ let us each give him a small portion of ours, and that will make him a good meal.’

‘ That is just like Bourguignon,’ said his neighbour: ‘ he only thinks of the present moment! When the poor child has breakfasted, how is he to get any dinner or supper?’

‘ We will give him some of ours again, Poitevin,’ said Bourguignon.

‘ But we cannot provide for him always,’ replied Poitevin. ‘ If he were only strong enough, he could commence an apprenticeship.’

‘ True, we cannot provide for him always,’ repeated the invalid. ‘ If he were only big enough, he could enter the army.’

‘ Well, we must find out what he can do,’ replied the foreman.

But just as they were preparing to examine him, a waggon stopped before the house, from which a gentleman alighted. The workmen quickly dispersed, all of them seizing their various tools, and in an instant they were busily employed, leaving Cecil and his dog to themselves.

Chapter X

The Architect

‘ Nor yet at work!’ said the gentleman from the waggon angrily, for he had not been duped by the sudden industry of the workmen.

‘ I will explain the whole affair to you, Mr. Dumont,’ replied the foreman. ‘ We quite forgot ourselves while

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listening to this poor child, whose history is so interesting that he has nearly made fools of us all, and set us blubbering.'

'And pray, what is his history?' questioned Mr. Dumont, glancing at Cecil, who bashfully hung down his head.

'We don't exactly know, sir; but it's all one—it's very interesting, that I can tell you.'

At this juncture the old soldier stepped forward and said: 'Sir, when this good man says he don't know the child's history, he partly speaks the truth, and partly he does not speak the truth. Take a pinch of snuff, sir? What, you don't make use of any? Ah! I beg your pardon.'

He then, in a few words, explained in what manner he had found the boy, and repeated everything which Cecil had told him, as well as his reasons for not mentioning the name of the relation by whom he was abandoned.

'Nonsense! A parcel of lies! A little vagabond! A little hypocrite!' muttered the architect, glancing suspiciously at the child, who, to conceal his confusion, commenced caressing his dog. 'What is your name?' demanded Mr. Dumont abruptly.

'Cecil Fernand.'

'And you have no father, no mother, no relations—nobody to take care of you?'

Cecil hid his face on the neck of the dog to conceal the tears that sprang to his eyes.

'And you were abandoned yesterday morning in the Tuileries, and you do not choose to say by whom?'

Cecil shook his head mournfully.

'What do you know how to do?'

'Nothing, sir,' replied the child, with a sigh that was half a sob.

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‘Your parents, then, did not teach you anything?’

‘Oh yes, sir, that they did—a great many things,’ replied Cecil with animation. ‘My uncle had me taught to read and to write, and I have studied geography and arithmetic, and a little Latin, and I have learned to play upon the violin, and to dance, and——’

‘Your uncle, then, was rich?’

‘I do not know, sir; but the house was full of fine things, and we never wanted anything.’

‘And your uncle is dead?’

Cecil bowed his head. A momentary silence ensued. The architect was attentively scanning the delicate features and fragile appearance of the young orphan.

‘How old are you?’ asked he at length.

‘Twelve years old, sir.’

‘Can you ride on horseback?’

‘Yes, sir,’ replied Cecil proudly, ‘with stirrups and without stirrups. My uncle had plenty of horses at his country-seat.’

‘You are a fine-looking little fellow. You would make an excellent groom. Will you enter my service?’

‘No, sir,’ replied Cecil determinedly.

‘Hoity toity! And why do you object, pray?’

‘Because I do not choose to be a servant.’

‘You do not, eh? I suppose you prefer being a little lazy beggar?’ answered the architect in an angry tone. ‘Very well; be off! Go about your business at once, and take care that I don’t set eyes upon you again, or I shall have you taken up as a vagrant and put into prison.’

‘Oh, sir!’ exclaimed Cecil, clasping his hands imploringly together, ‘pray, for pity’s sake do not do that! I am not lazy—I am not a vagabond! I would not be your servant; but if you will give me some work I will do what I can. I will carry stones or lime; I will help the

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masons and learn to be a mason ; but I cannot be your servant—indeed, sir, I feel as though I ought not to be.’

‘ You little fool ! It is much easier to be a groom than a mason. A servant has very little to do.’

‘ I do not care for that, sir. I cannot be a servant.’

‘ But you will have nothing to do but ride behind my carriage or on my horses.’

‘ Then I should only learn idle habits ; and I should be obliged to associate with the servants, which my uncle always forbade me to do ; and I should become—no, no, sir, I cannot be your groom.’

‘ Enough said on that subject. Go ! be off ! And take care that I do not catch you. Do you hear me ? Go, I tell you !’

The architect lifted his cane with a menacing air, and Cecil, making a sign for the dog to follow him, bowed to Mr. Dumont, and said with more dignity than could have been expected from a child :

‘ Do not strike me, sir. I am *not* your servant ; therefore you have no right to strike me.’

Cecil had not walked a great distance before a ‘ hist, hist !’ which proceeded from behind him, made him turn his head. The old soldier hobbled towards him and said : ‘ Here is some bread which the workmen sent you. You are a noble boy ; you spoke as a gentleman’s son should have done. If you can’t find a place to sleep in to-night, come back here.’

‘ I cannot do that,’ said Cecil. ‘ That wicked man has threatened to have me taken up ; but I thank you from my heart.’

He took the enormous slice of brown bread which his friend offered him, and proceeded on his way.

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Chapter XI

A Promenade in Paris

ONCE more the young orphan found himself alone in the streets of Paris. In one hand he held the string which was fastened around his dog's neck, and in the other the slice of bread. Beneath his arm he carried his little book containing the memoirs of Robinson Crusoe.

'The first thing that Robinson did in his desert island,' said Cecil to himself, 'was to make the rounds and see where he was'; and with these words he commenced eating his bread, occasionally throwing small bits to his dog, and gazing in at the windows of the beautiful shops that he met at every step.

'Surely I shall never starve in this Paris, where there are bakers and confectioners and eating-houses at every block. And as for a place to sleep in, surely I can find lodgings where there are so many beautiful houses, with all the doors thrown invitingly open! As for the people, they don't look much as if they would eat me up, as poor Robinson Crusoe feared the cannibals would eat him. Courage! courage!' And he stopped before a tailor's store.

The tailor, who happened to be standing in front of his shop, looked at him and said: 'If you want any new clothes, young gentleman, come in. We keep a superior quality here.'

'Thank you, sir,' replied Cecil, delighted with the courteous mien of the storekeeper; 'my coat is quite new, but when it is worn out I shall certainly come here.'

'That is right; we will suit you, my little friend; no fear but we will suit you.'

Cecil walked a little farther, and was stopped by a man who was selling canes.

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‘Look at this little cane, young sir. A little cane would become you so well! Try this one—it is small and pliable. It looks as if it was made for you. You may have it for a mere trifle—almost nothing.’

‘Thank you—thank you kindly,’ replied Cecil. ‘I will not take one to-day’; and he passed on.

Emboldened by the pleasant manners of the two merchants, he walked confidently into a large hotel, for it was about midday, and the sun pained his head.

‘What do you want here?’ called out the doorkeeper.

‘The sun is very warm,’ said Cecil, bowing politely. ‘Could you not permit me to rest here for a few moments?’

‘Be off with you, you little vagabond!’ replied the man, closing the door in the child’s face.

Cecil was lost in wonder, and stood gazing at the closed door some minutes, without seeming to realize that it was really shut. ‘No matter,’ thought he at last, ‘I shall not find all the world in such a bad humour as this old man.’

At a short distance from the hotel stood a booth, the counter of which contained numerous delicacies, and various enough in the kinds to please every palate. On the step of the booth stood a young man, who looked as though he had not despised his own dainties. Cecil stopped immediately in front of the man, and looked up into his face without daring to speak.

‘Do you want something to eat, my little friend?’ asked the man.

‘Oh yes, sir. I have eaten nothing to-day but a piece of bread this morning.’

‘Come in, come in, and take a choice of these niceties,’ said the man in the most amiable manner possible.

‘But I must tell you beforehand,’ said Cecil, following

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the shopkeeper into the middle of his booth, 'that I have no money—not a penny.'

'Then what business have you here?' replied he, the smile instantly vanishing from his countenance.

'I am an unfortunate child, who has been abandoned by his guardian in this city,' replied Cecil. 'I am tired and warm, and very hungry——'

'I am very sorry for you,' answered the man coolly. 'There is something for you—take it. Go, and don't stop the passage.'

When Cecil saw the single penny which accompanied these words, his cheeks flushed, and he could hardly restrain his indignation. 'I am not a beggar, sir. I did not ask for money,' said he.

'You will get nothing here, so make yourself scarce.'

Cecil obeyed, and walked on; but he was so fatigued that his legs trembled beneath him, and even the dog drooped his ears and let his tail drop between his legs, while his tongue hung from his mouth.

As he was traversing the Boulevards, which is one of the widest and gayest streets in Paris, Cecil observed a number of chairs standing upon the side-walk beneath the shade of some fine old trees. Hastily advancing towards them, he threw himself upon the nearest one, too exhausted, faint, and sick at heart even to look around him.

Hardly was he seated before an old woman placed herself in front of him, silently extending her hand.

'What do you wish?' asked Cecil.

'A penny for your chair, to be sure!'

'What! You have fifty empty chairs here, and you will not let me occupy one without paying you?'

'Certainly not; your penny, if you please, young master.'

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‘ I have no money,’ replied Cecil, without stirring.

‘ Then sit upon the ground,’ said the woman, shaking the chair upon which Cecil was resting so violently that he could with difficulty retain his place.

‘ You are not a good woman,’ said Cecil, rising.

‘ I am the mistress of these chairs,’ replied the woman, quietly seating herself in the very chair Cecil had vacated.

Chapter XII

The Remnants of the Chicken, the Piece of Bread,
and the Glass of Water

As though instinctively desirous of leading the way and of protecting his master, the dog walked in front of Cecil. At last they came to a coffee-house, before which the dog paused, apparently to inhale the grateful odour of the viands. Cecil followed his example. Before the boy could foresee his dog’s intention, Fox threw himself against the half-open door, and disappeared in the long entry.

‘ Fox ! Fox ! where are you going ?’ shouted Cecil ; but the dog did not return.

‘ As soon as the people in this house see poor Fox they will chase him out of doors ; therefore I may as well wait for him here,’ thought Cecil, as he seated himself on the doorstep.

Meanwhile Fox had made his way to the kitchen. He was so small and so black that for some time he ran about unperceived, licking up the gravy that now and then flowed from some carelessly held dish, or appeasing his hunger with small bits that had been flung beneath the table. After a while a little boy who was assisting one of the cooks caught sight of him.

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‘ Oh, look at that pretty little dog !’ exclaimed he.
‘ Where does he come from ? Here, doggie, doggie !’

Attracted by the childish voice, Fox leaped upon the boy and fondly licked the hand which caressed him. At that moment one of the waiters placed upon the table a dish which contained the remnant of a chicken, saying :
‘ Throw that away and wash the dish.’

The little boy left the dog to obey the order ; but Fox followed him, wagging his tail, and looking supplicatingly into his face, then glancing sideways at the dish, and rubbing his nose against the urchin’s hand.

‘ Are you hungry, little dog ?’ said the boy kindly, and presenting the dish to him. ‘ Here !’

The dog looked at the dish, then at the boy, and wagged his tail harder than before.

‘ Take it,’ said the child, making an encouraging sign to the animal.

The dog seized the piece of chicken between his teeth and ran from the kitchen.

‘ Well, where are you going ?’ cried the boy. ‘ Here, here !’

But the dog did not return, and desirous as was his new friend to follow him, he dare not abandon his post, and commenced washing the dishes.

He had just made a large pile of them when he felt something warm touching his feet, and, looking down, beheld the little dog crouching beside him.

‘ Well, there you are !’ said the delighted boy. ‘ I suppose you want something more to eat ?’

The dog, as though he comprehended him, wagged his tail and looked up supplicatingly.

‘ I have only got this piece of bread for you, little dog. Will you have it ?’

Fox caught at the offered bread, and again escaped from the kitchen.

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‘What a queer little animal!’ exclaimed the boy. ‘I wonder where he goes to devour what I give him.’

‘What are you talking to yourself about, you little rascal?’ demanded the head cook.

‘Oh, Mr. Chipart, a moment ago such a beautiful little black dog ran in here, and he took the bits I gave him so politely; but he ran away to eat them—I can’t think where.’

‘If he comes back,’ said the cook, ‘be sure you tell me. I dote upon a handsome dog.’

‘Oh, here he is!’ shouted the boy in ecstasy.

‘Poor fellow! poor fellow!’ said the cook, leaving his work to take a nearer survey of the dog, who held his mouth open as though ready to take whatever might be offered to him. ‘Oh, what a pretty fellow! But he hangs his tongue out of his mouth; he must be thirsty. Baptiste, give him a drink; take good care of him. I must go back to my fire; but take care of him, and see that he don’t run away.’

‘Look, Mr. Chipart, he won’t drink,’ said Baptiste, pointing at Fox with his finger; for the dog was standing by the table, looking from the water to the boy, and from the boy to the water, as though he would beg him to do something, which it was difficult to express.

‘Perhaps he wants to go and drink in the secret corner where he eats. Go, carry the water wherever he pleases, but be sure you do not lose sight of him.’

When Fox saw the little boy take up the bowl he gave a leap for joy, ran towards the kitchen-door, then back to the table beside which Baptiste stood, and then flew to the door again. Finding that the boy followed him, he sprang into the entry and led the way up the stairs, ever and anon looking back to see if Baptiste was behind.

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Chapter XIII

What became of the Remnants of the Chicken, the Piece of Bread, and the Glass of Water

WE left Cecil seated upon the doorstep of the coffee-house anxiously glancing at the passage through which his dog had disappeared, but not daring to enter. After some time had passed, Cecil almost despaired of again beholding his cherished dog, and began to feel sadder and more lonely than ever. Just as he was burying his face in his hands, he felt something brushing against him, and, turning, beheld Fox. The poor animal held something in his mouth, which he carefully laid on the knees of Cecil, briskly wagging his tail and licking his lips, as though he would say, 'Eat, but don't forget me.'

'Where did you get that?' inquired Cecil, half unconsciously talking to the dog, as though he could understand. 'Ah! you stole it, you little thief!'

Fox made a hasty movement, accompanied by a half growl, as though he was indignant at the accusation.

'Did anybody give it to you?' continued Cecil.

The silence of the dog seemed to answer affirmatively.

'It is a good bit of chicken,' said Cecil, looking at the meat without touching it—'very good indeed—as good as I ever ate at my uncle's table; but, Fox, I ought to have a piece of bread to eat with it.'

The dog ran off as though he had really understood his master, and when he reappeared it was with a piece of bread in his mouth. Cecil could not help kissing him, and said in a tone full of gratitude:

'Oh, if I am like Robinson Crusoe, you are my man Friday. Good Fox! Dear Fox! Charming little Fox! Now let us eat our dinner together.'

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‘The bones are for you, and the flesh for me ; the soft part of the bread for you, Fox, and the crust for me, Fox.’ And then the two caressed one another, each in his own way ; the hand of the child softly patted the back of the dog, and the tongue of the dog licked the hand of the child.

‘Oh, I am very thirsty !’ exclaimed Cecil when the repast was finished. Either the dog understood him, or he experienced the same sensation, for away he ran for the third time. Cecil did not sit listening long before he heard the patting of his dog’s feet—but not them alone, for he clearly distinguished heavier steps, which accompanied those of little Fox.

‘They are the steps of the master of the house,’ thought Cecil in a panic of terror. ‘No doubt he is angry. He is coming to make me pay for the bread and chicken. Oh, Holy Father, Thou Who didst permit the dog to relieve my wants, protect me now !’

The steps approached, and Cecil tremblingly raised his eyes. Instead of the giant of a man, in a fearful passion, and raising a stout cane, which he expected to see, he beheld the delicate form and fresh, laughing countenance of a child, neither larger nor stronger than himself, who held a bowl of water in his hand.

When Baptiste saw a bone of the chicken in Cecil’s hand, and observed that Fox had already curled himself up at the child’s feet, he said :

‘Then the bread and the chicken were for you, and the water also ?’

‘To be sure they were,’ replied Cecil, at once reassured ; ‘for me and my darling Fox.’

‘Well, that is funny. It is the queerest thing I ever heard of,’ said Baptiste, who in his surprise would have let fall the bowl of water, had not Cecil caught it.

‘Oh, what a dear, strange, faithful little dog !’ ex-

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claimed Baptiste, running back into the kitchen. 'Come and see—come and see—the strangest thing—the dear little fellow—come!'

And Baptiste disappeared from the kitchen, followed by a crowd of cooks and waiters, and several little boys who assisted them.

'Well, what is it—what is it?' they all shouted at a time. But the noise ceased as they beheld Cecil and the dog drinking from the bowl, which had just been taken from his lips.

'Then it was to see you that Baptiste called us?' said one of the cooks.

'Me and my dog,' answered Cecil, beginning to get frightened. 'Pray, do not be angry.'

'Angry! What should we be angry about? What a pretty little dog it is! It won't bite, will it? But where do you come from, little boy? You cannot be a beggar, for you are too well clad. Why, then, should you be obliged to dine off the bits given to your dog?'

Cecil hardly knew how to answer; but after a momentary silence he said: 'I am an unfortunate child, and have been abandoned in the streets of Paris; I dare not tell you by whom, and you must not ask me. All that I can say is that I have eaten nothing to-day but a slice of bread and the bits which you gave to my dog.'

'But why will you not tell us who abandoned you?' asked the chief cook.

'Because it was one of my own family, and it is not right to speak against one's own relations.'

The men were on the point of questioning Cecil further, when a bell sounded, and the voice of the master of the house was heard calling them. In an instant they all fled, but Baptiste, as he hurried away, said: 'Wait here a little while, and I will return.'



A crowd of cooks and waiters
and several little boys ~

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Cecil waited, and in about an hour Baptiste again stood beside him with an old basket in his hand. 'Are you very fond of your dog?' said he—'so fond that you could not part with him?'

'So fond that I would as lief part with my eyes!' replied Cecil.

'Then follow my advice: take this basket and run away as fast as you can, for Mr. Chipart is determined to have the dog, whether you will or no.'

'My dog! But what right has he to it?' asked Cecil indignantly.

'The right which strength gives. Do as I tell you—take this basket—you will find something to eat and to drink in it—quick! Make your escape!'

Alarmed at the idea that his dog—his only friend—might be taken from him by force, Cecil hastily took the basket, fastened the string around the neck of Fox, thanked Baptiste, and ran till he was out of sight of the house.

It was now night, but the light from the gas-lamps was so strong that he could see his way as well as by daylight.

Chapter XIV

The Little Schoolmaster

CECIL soon found himself within sight of the house where he had slept on the preceding night. His heart beat violently as he approached it. 'Will the old soldier receive me?' said he to himself. 'Oh, how dreadful it is not to know where to obtain a night's shelter! Augustus! Augustus! Shall I find all the world as cruel as you?'

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Cecil knocked on the boards placed in front of the entrance.

‘Is it you, Austerlitz?’ asked a feeble voice from within.

‘Yes, good Father La Tuile, it is Austerlitz, and little Robinson, too. Will you receive both?’

‘You are very late,’ said the old man, looking out.

‘Then you expected me?’ inquired Cecil in surprise.

‘Certainly, my little friend. In a large town where the doors only open at the touch of silver, I knew that there was no shelter for empty pockets. Come in—your little bed is ready; here is your supper.’

‘Thank you; but I have something to eat along with me.’

‘Then keep it for your breakfast. Now sit down, and tell me why you refused to be Mr. Dumont’s groom.’

‘Because my uncle did not educate me to become a servant.’

‘But you must live, and you must eat.’

‘Yes, and I must work, too.’

‘Pray, what work could you do with those tender little hands of yours? But I am sleepy; we will talk to-morrow. Good-night, little monkey! Tell Austerlitz to wake you early.’

‘That he shall do! Good-night, my kind friend!’

In a few moments more the soldier, Cecil, and Fox were all fast asleep.

Cecil was awake before dawn, and lay still, reflecting upon what he had better do. When the workmen came, he went to meet them, and said, but not without a blush: ‘Here I am again, and I wish I were a mason. Will you teach me to be a mason?’

‘Poor little child!’ said one. ‘You are too feeble to become a mason.’

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‘But I must live,’ returned Cecil.

‘If you become a mason,’ said another of the workmen, ‘it would be necessary for you to serve an apprenticeship ; and, to be an apprentice, you must pay a certain sum.’

‘I have not a single penny,’ answered Cecil ; ‘but if you will teach me what you know, I will teach you what I know.’

‘And what do you know ?’ asked the workman.

‘I know how to play on the violin.’

‘But that would be of no use to me.’

‘I know how to write.’

‘But to write one must read, and we do not even know how to spell.’

‘But I will teach you to read.’

‘Ah ! that might do.’

‘Do you hear that ?’ said the old soldier in admiring astonishment. ‘What sense children have nowadays ! The march of intellect is wonderful. Why, in my time, the idea of teaching my neighbour to read would never have entered into my head ; as for that matter, I never knew how to read myself.’

‘I will teach you,’ said Cecil.

‘Thank you, little monkey. I’m rather too old to learn ; but since you know how to read, you shall read to me about the battles of my Emperor.’

‘Comrades,’ said the mason who had been talking with Cecil, ‘what do you say to the child’s plan ? He is too small and too feeble to learn our craft, but, still, we can be of service to him and he to us. Many of us do not know how to read ; he will teach us during our resting hours, and we will let him share our repast. Then Father La Tuile can give him a bed, and in this manner he will have food and shelter for a month at least.’

The workmen agreed to their comrade’s proposition ;

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and after breakfast the self-constituted little schoolmaster gave them their first lesson out of his 'Adventures of Robinson Crusoe.' The soldier then brought forth a large parcel of old newspapers and said to Cecil: 'Now come and read me all about these battles, little monkey; that will take me back to the good old times.'

'The good old times in which men fought and killed one another,' said Cecil, laughing.

'Yes, little monkey; and when one was never sure in the morning of finding oneself whole at evening.'

'And you call those *good* times when one evening you found that *you* were not as whole as when you got up?' demanded Cecil, glancing at the old soldier's wooden leg.

'I would give my other leg to see those times again,' said the old soldier with enthusiasm.

Chapter XV

The Little Schoolmaster loses his Scholars

EVERY day Cecil gave the masons one lesson in the morning and another in the evening. He read the newspapers to the soldier, whose stock seemed inexhaustible; and the rest of the time played with Fox, who hourly became more attached to his master.

But a new affliction soon overwhelmed poor Cecil. The house was completed, there was no longer any need of the old soldier as guard, and the mason scholars were ready to continue their tour. One morning, which Cecil expected to pass alone with his invalid friend, much to the surprise of the little boy, his ten grown-up scholars presented themselves before him.

'Good-morning, little schoolmaster,' said they, all of them shaking hands with him in turn.

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‘What ! do you want to take a lesson to-day ?’ asked Cecil.

‘No, little schoolmaster,’ replied one of the troop ; ‘we have come to bid you adieu for ever.’

‘Are you going ?’ inquired Cecil in alarm.

‘Yes ; to-morrow we must proceed on our journey, but with the permission of your good friend here, we wished you to pass the last day with us.’

‘Take the child with you,’ said the soldier ; ‘but be sure you do not make him drink. Why, the little rogue, how handsome he looks !’

The ten journeymen walked away together, with Cecil and his dog in the midst of them. They proceeded gaily along the Champs Élysées, and walked some distance beyond the barriers, until they came to a house over which was written, ‘Journemen’s Coffee-house.’ They entered, called for refreshments, and seated themselves at table. Although it was hardly midday when they took their places, it was night before any of them proposed to return to the city.

Poor Cecil, in spite of their merry jests and evident enjoyment, felt lonely and dissatisfied. Their conversation was not suited to his capacities, and he had been reared in too much refinement to feel at home with his rough companions in their convivial hours.

‘Is it not almost time to return ?’ he ventured to say, as candles were placed upon the table before them.

The journeymen paid no attention to his words, but one of them, who was considerably excited by wine, rose and addressed his comrades : ‘Comrades, a thought has struck me. The night is fresh and beautiful. We have all our bundles with us ; let us set off at once. In the month of August it is much pleasanter travelling by the light of the moon than beneath the rays of the burning sun.’

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‘Good, good!’ they all replied in chorus. ‘Let us start at once!’

‘And me—what will become of me?’ asked Cecil in a plaintive tone.

‘Ah, little schoolmaster! we quite forgot you,’ said one of the masons, scratching his head. ‘What are we to do with you? Let me see. I have it! Comrades, let us raise a subscription for our little schoolmaster. Here is a shilling to begin with.’

All of the journeymen followed their leader’s example, and placed a shilling in Cecil’s hand.

‘There! With that sum,’ said the first mason, ‘you might sail for America. Take the same road by which you came until you have passed the barriers. On the other side of the gates you will find a coach-stand. Jump into a hack, and tell the coachman to drive you to Great Louis Street, number twenty-four. What! You look at the money as if it would burn you, and don’t take it? Why, you little fool, have you not earned it? Did you not teach us our letters and a great deal more? For nothing one gets nothing in this world; but every labourer merits his hire. This is yours; put it in your pocket, and take good care it is not stolen from you. And now, good-bye! Shake hands, little schoolmaster. Give us your paw, Fox. Comrades, we are all ready; let us be off.’

Cecil, with tears in his eyes, beheld their departure; and then, putting the ten shillings in his pocket, he set out, taking the road which led to Paris. Fox, who had eaten his fill, seemed not to comprehend the cause of his master’s sadness, but gambolled about, every once in a while looking up to Cecil, as though he would inquire what was the matter.

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Chapter XVI

The Poor Blind Man

As they passed a dark alley on their right, Cecil's ears caught the sound of groans and sobs, evidently proceeding from a person in distress. Looking about him, he saw an old man at a short distance, extended upon the ground. Following the dictates of his heart, Cecil ran towards the prostrate man, and attempted to assist him.

'Did you fall down, my friend? Have you hurt yourself?' inquired the child kindly.

'I am blind,' sobbed out the old man.

'And you have lost your way, have you not?' said Cecil.

'I am blind,' repeated the old man.

'How did you come here?' asked Cecil. 'You could not have come alone.'

'No, I came with my faithful, sagacious friend, who guided me everywhere—my poor little dog. He ate something that poisoned him, and he lies not far from here quite dead. My poor Rover! What shall I ever do without him?'

'A coach,' said Cecil, 'will take you home.'

'Home! Oh no, no! I must not go home. My poor wife! My poor daughter! After the death of my dog I tried to find my way alone, and fell down, as you perceive. My arm hurts me so much that I cannot move it without groaning. If it had not been for my misfortune I might have gained with my violin, which lies somewhere near me, money enough to pay for my lodgings, or at least quiet my landlord for a time; but now what am I to do?'

'You could have gained money by your violin?' questioned Cecil delightedly.

'With my violin! To be sure I could. Why not?'

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Cecil stood several moments lost in thought.

‘Does it require much skill to earn money by playing on the violin?’ asked Cecil at length.

‘Much skill? Not a great deal. Why, I only know one tune, and I play that by ear. I have played the violin these thirty years. My wife made a little by sewing, and my daughter by selling herbs and flowers. As for my son, he is a mason, and what he makes during the week he drinks upon Sunday, so I do not calculate ever to receive anything from him. Until now we have got along tolerably. We were very poor—still, we managed to live.’

‘Good old man,’ said Cecil, ‘could you not raise yourself and try to walk?’

‘My arm hurts me dreadfully, but I will try,’ said the blind man, making an effort to rise. ‘There! I am on my feet once more. No; I do not think my arm can be broken, but it must be dreadfully bruised. Will you give me your hand, my good child, and guide me? Where do you live?’

‘In Great Louis Street,’ answered Cecil, making the old man lean upon his shoulder.

‘I live in the same street. If I am not at home by midnight, my daughter will come to seek me. Therefore do not be afraid. She will take you home safely.’

‘That will do very well, and meanwhile I mean to try if I can make a little money for you, since you say that money can be made by playing on the violin. Come along, Fox!’

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Chapter XVII

The Little Musician

WHILE seeking a good place where he might stand and play on the violin, Cecil related his little history and all his adventures since his arrival in Paris to the blind man, but without mentioning his cousin's name.

'Where had we best place ourselves?' asked he of the blind man.

'In front of a coffee-house, if you can, my little friend.'

'Here is one — "The Coffee - House of the Ambassadors."'

'Choose a table where there are children, and let us stand directly before them.'

'Why *children*?' asked Cecil.

'Because children do not understand music, and it always pleases them, whether it is good or bad.'

'Thank you,' said Cecil, laughing. 'You doubt my being able to play well. Here is a table at which a gentleman and three little girls are sitting.'

'That is good,' said the old man. 'Now make your dog sit down on the ground, put this little tin platter by him, and commence.'

Cecil gave one touch with his bow on the violin, which astonished the old man. Cecil continued playing.

'Why, you are skilful. Everybody will come to hear you.'

'Yes,' said Cecil, quite agitated; 'but I feel ashamed, for I never played before anybody but my uncle and my teacher.'

'Does anybody give money?'

'Yes, the plate is almost full,' replied Cecil; 'but the people stare at me so much, it confuses me.'

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‘Take courage, my dear child—courage!’ said the old man in a low and broken voice. ‘If I do not carry twenty-six shillings home to my family this evening, to-morrow we shall be turned into the street, without a place where we can find shelter. My poor wife for the last two years has been rendered helpless by a paralytic stroke; and my daughter, a girl of seventeen, has never known a happy day. Take courage, my dear child; I hear the pennies falling into the plate. Alas! it will take a great many to make twenty-six shillings. But what is the matter? You don’t play with so much power as you did at first, and your time is slower.’

‘The perspiration is rolling down my face in large drops,’ replied Cecil. ‘I did not think it was so difficult to play in public, and before people one does not know.’

‘You are saving a poor family from misery,’ replied the blind man; ‘let this thought banish your natural timidity. But if you are too warm, take some of the money out of the plate and go into the coffee-house to get a drink, my child.’

‘Thank you,’ said Cecil, ‘but I will not use any of that money.’

‘Then take your violin and play on. Play on, my dear friend, my preserver! God will bless you for this noble act. You have had pity upon a poor blind old man, and He will have pity on you.’

‘Hush, good old man!’ said Cecil. ‘There is very little merit in what I am doing; and your praises make me tremulous. I have played all the airs I know. Shall I commence again?’

‘If you are not tired, my child.’

‘No; on the contrary, I am beginning to get accustomed to the crowd. You will see that I shall play more boldly this time.’

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And, in truth, Cecil regained his self-possession, and played with remarkable grace, beauty, and sweetness. Everybody was delighted with the little musician, complimented and encouraged him ; but it was growing late, and the crowd gradually dispersed. When the coffee-house was vacated, Cecil ceased playing, and said to the old man :

‘ Everybody has gone.’

‘ Very well ; count the money,’ said the old man, ‘ and divide it. You have well earned your share.’

‘ Divide it !’ exclaimed Cecil. ‘ No, indeed ; I have been playing for your benefit only—I have ten shillings, you know. I am rich.’

The blind man smiled as he took the treasure from the child’s hands, and at the same moment the keeper of the coffee-house came towards the blind man, saying :

‘ Now that the tables are unoccupied, come and sit down, my good old man, and let your charming child refresh himself. What will you have ? Some beer—milk—cakes—anything you like ?’

‘ You never were so polite to me before, my good sir,’ replied the blind man, accepting the invitation.

‘ In sooth,’ replied the man, laughing, ‘ your violin generally drives away my company, but to-night your little boy has drawn me quite a number of customers. Drink—eat—do not hesitate—and come back to-morrow.’

A young girl in tears now approached the table where the old man and Cecil were eating, and exclaimed :

‘ Oh, my dear father, how worried my mother and I have been about you ! Here it is nearly midnight !’

‘ What do you think, Mary ?’ replied the old man gaily. ‘ I have lost my dog, my arm is bruised, and without this little angel that the good God put in my way, there is no knowing when you would have seen

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me again. Sit down there, daughter, and count the money.'

'Provided it is worth counting,' said the poor girl, sitting down, and gathering the coppers into a pile. 'The landlord has been to our house, father. He was very angry, and said if we did not pay all we owe him before twelve o'clock to-morrow he would turn us out of the house, and retain all our little furniture, our clothes—everything, even to my pigeons! We had depended on my brother's wages; but, alas! he did not bring them. Could he have had the heart to go to the tavern and drink away his money when his family were in so much distress? Heaven grant that he may one day be cured of his weakness! There, all the piles are made, and there are twelve pence in each pile. It is easy to count them now.'

'Well, how much is there?' asked the blind man impatiently, while Mary again counted the piles separately.

'Seventeen,' said she. 'I have counted and recounted them carefully, and still there are only seventeen shillings. Oh, my father, we are lost!'

Cecil, who had noticed the girl's hands tremble as she was counting the piles, and her despair as she was obliged to stop at seventeen, took his ten shillings out of his pocket and threw them among the coppers.

'Seventeen and ten make twenty-seven,' said he, laughing merrily. 'It seems to me you have twenty-seven shillings.'

'You have concealed part of the receipts in your pocket, then?' asked the young girl reproachfully.

'Concealed!' replied Cecil indignantly. 'Those ten shillings are mine, miss; and I give them to you to complete the sum you require. It is very fortunate I did not go home in a coach, as I had intended,' added

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he, 'for then I should not have been able to do you a service.'

'Your ten shillings,' said the old man, much affected—'I do not wish them, my child. Keep them—keep them yourself. Mary, return those ten shillings to this generous child. They are all he has in the world, and he gives them to me! Where is he? Your hand—give me your hand, my noble boy, that I may kiss it.'

'Well, what is the matter, my good old man? Why do you weep? You make me cry to see you,' said Cecil, wiping his eyes.

Astonished at this scene, Mary glanced alternately from her father to the boy.

'You want twenty-six shillings to pay your rent, and as I only made seventeen, it is but just that I should give you the rest,' said Cecil.

'*Just!*' exclaimed the old man—'*just!* This child calls his modest action—his greatest sacrifice—mere *justice!* Have you given him back his ten shillings, Mary?'

'But, father——' said Mary hesitatingly.

'My daughter, do as I bid you,' replied the old man sternly; 'and not only that, but also divide the other money with him. If the sum had been complete, I would have said nothing, but taken this kind and generous child's share to pay my rent. Since it is not so, it will not save me from being turned out of our house to-morrow. Give him eight shillings and sixpence, Mary, and I shall still be under great obligations to him.'

'I do not want your eight shillings and sixpence,' replied Cecil positively; 'and I want you to take my ten shillings. My poor uncle used to say that it was the duty of all men to assist one another as much as it was in their power. I am not a man, but still, if I serve you to-day,

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you will have an opportunity of returning it some other time.'

'Take this child's ten shillings, good old man,' said a gentleman who was sitting at a neighbouring table, and who for some minutes had been listening to the discussion between the blind man and Cecil—'take them. I could give them to you myself, but I will not deprive this noble boy of the pleasure of doing so generous an action. All I can do is to promise to return him the money. But it is getting very late, and I have not time to talk any longer. We will meet again to-morrow.'

The gentleman walked up to a coach-stand and called out to one of the drivers :

'Peter, take these people home, and notice the house particularly, that you may drive me there to-morrow. To-morrow, my friends,' added he, assisting the blind man into the coach—'to-morrow I will see you—no thanks—your thanks are only due to this child. Good-bye, my little friend, until to-morrow.'

'Where shall I drive ?' asked the coachman of the blind man.

'To No. 24, Great Louis Street, for the little gentleman, and for me to No. 3, Port-Mahon Street.'

Then Cecil, who, in his ignorance of the world, saw nothing extraordinary in this gentleman's kindness, called out in his turn :

'Until to-morrow, sir !'

And the horses set off at full gallop.

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Chapter XVIII

The Tract of Land

CECIL slept as soundly and contentedly that night, on his bed of straw, as he could have done had it been one of down. On awaking in the morning, he beheld the strange gentleman and the old soldier standing beside him, conversing together.

‘So, my poor child,’ said the strange gentleman to him, as soon as he opened his eyes, ‘you have been abandoned, and a feeling of delicacy has deterred you from mentioning the name of the villain by whom you have been so shamefully treated. Here, first take these ten shillings that I owe you, and then we will see what we can do for you. What have you learnt?’

‘I can read, write, calculate, and, above all, play on the violin, as you perhaps heard yesterday evening,’ replied Cecil, getting up, and taking the money which the gentleman offered him. ‘But it is all the same to me; and it is well to be able to make money in that way, though I felt very badly to have everybody staring at me, and I was ashamed at every penny that dropped at my feet. If it had not been to serve the old man, I am afraid I should not have continued playing.’

The stranger replied: ‘You could not select a more foolish employment, my child; and, as you have only a very ordinary talent for the violin, it would take much time and money to attain perfection in the art. It was your youth, probably, rather than your playing, which won you so much money last evening; and I think it would be but a poor employment for you to wander about the streets with a violin. I have a proposition to make, and you must tell me how it pleases you. That

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dog is yours, is it not ?' said the gentleman, glancing at Fox.

' Yes, sir,' replied Cecil, in some alarm.

The gentleman resumed : ' My name is Raimond. I have gained a livelihood by weaving cotton caps, socks and stockings. But I own some land in the neighbourhood of Beaujon, at the end of the Champs Élysées. This ground is surrounded by a wall, and as there are a quantity of planks, stakes, old garden-tools, and some fine fruit-trees on it, it attracts plunderers. I want to station there a person who can keep watch, and in case of danger, who can arouse the National Guard, who are posted at a short distance. You and your dog would just suit my purpose, and here is a little horn you could blow if there were any necessity. But, tell me first, would you be afraid ?'

' Afraid of what ?' asked Cecil. ' Of thieves ? I have nothing that can be stolen but my ten shillings ; and I will hide them where I will defy anybody to find them. As to ghosts, my uncle assured me there were no such things. So, then, I don't see what there can be to make me afraid.'

' Will you accompany me, then ?' asked Mr. Raimond.

' Wait a moment, sir,' said the old soldier. ' This child was, as it were, placed under my protection by the hand of Providence, and, with all due respect to you, I would like to know how much you will pay him for taking care of your ground.'

' Oh, indeed, not much !' replied Mr. Raimond, laughing. ' In the first place, he will get neither food nor lodging, for there is neither house nor table in my enclosure ; but there are plenty of planks with which he can make both, if he chooses. Then there is fruit, which he can eat, and there is ground, in which he can plant

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vegetables. I will provide him with seed ; and from time to time, when I come to town, I will bring him some provisions ; and *perhaps* I will not let him die of hunger !’

‘ No, truly, I am sure the gentleman will not let me die of hunger,’ said Cecil. ‘ I will guard your property, sir. Let us go. But wait a moment for me, I pray you.’

And with the confidence of a child who knows not what it is to doubt, Cecil ran out of the house, and after a short absence returned, carrying in his hand a package of tobacco and an earthen pipe, representing a head in a three-cornered hat.

‘ Here, my good Father La Tuile,’ said Cecil, offering the pipe and tobacco to the soldier. ‘ I would not ride home in a coach yesterday, that I might have the pleasure of supplying you with tobacco. Here is the likeness of your beloved Emperor on the pipe—that is the reason I selected it. Accept it and embrace me. I am at your service now, Mr. Raimond. Come on, Fox ! But where is my book ? Oh, I had almost forgotten my book !’

‘ By my Emperor—by the name of the great Bonaparte, this little monkey is a charming little fellow !’ exclaimed the old soldier with emotion. ‘ I will come to see you, my brave boy, when I can walk out, and we will drink each other’s health. I will not say farewell, my little friend.’

‘ You have spent part of your ten shillings,’ said Mr. Raimond to Cecil, as they were getting into the waggon.

‘ To give pleasure to that brave old man,’ replied Cecil.

‘ What book is that under your arm ?’ asked Mr. Raimond.

‘ It is the “ History of Robinson Crusoe in the Desert Island,” sir,’ replied Cecil gravely. ‘ It is a very interesting story, I can assure you.’

The waggon stopped before the gate of the enclosure, the walls of which were full of crevices.

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Mr. Raimond alighted, and, taking a key from his pocket, introduced Cecil and Fox into a large square tract of ground. Three quarters of this ground were uncultivated and overgrown with thistles ; but on the other quarter stood several large trees, thickly covered with leaves, but bearing very little fruit. In a corner of this enclosure lay a heap of old planks, stakes, rusted tools, and broken stones. The wall around was very irregular, and partly broken down.

‘ Here is your land,’ said Mr. Raimond to Cecil, ‘ and there is your orchard. Take care that the robbers don’t carry off all your fruit. You can plant potatoes here ; they are very easily raised. Let grass grow on this side, and when it is high enough cut it down, and all the gardeners in the neighbourhood will buy it for their rabbits. You can be as happy as a king if you know how to arrange everything well.’

‘ Do you give me all this ?’ asked Cecil, wonderstruck.

‘ I do not give you anything, but I permit you to enjoy it all,’ said Mr. Raimond.

‘ That is to say,’ replied Cecil, ‘ that I may go, come, run, dig the ground, do whatever I choose, and even build myself a house with these planks ?’

‘ Exactly.’

‘ Now I am indeed like Robinson on the desert island !’

‘ Exactly.’

‘ And how, sir, can I thank you for all your goodness ?’

‘ By watching that nobody comes at night to tear down the walls or steal my fruit. This is very easy, is it not ? Your dog can warn you of the approach of intruders ; then with this little horn ’ (and Mr. Raimond took the horn out of his waggon and gave it to Cecil), ‘ you can call the guard, who will come to your assistance.’

‘ I understand you perfectly,’ said Cecil ; ‘ and, if you

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will permit me, sir, I am going to commence work immediately, that I may have my house made before sunset.'

'I am very sorry not to be able to help you,' replied Mr. Raimond, 'but I am obliged to start to-day on a journey of one or two months. Fortunately, it is warm, and you have time enough before winter to build your house. However, if you will commence immediately, I can give you some advice. Take this corner of the wall, which will shelter you from the north winds, and which will also form two sides of your dwelling. I—— But how old are you?' asked Mr. Raimond, suddenly interrupting himself.

'Twelve years old,' replied Cecil.

'You are very young, my little fellow. I am sorry I cannot do anything more for you. I would have taken you to my house at Saint Germain, but my wife has lost a little boy of just your age, and the sight of you would cause her to weep and fall into one of her nervous fits. However, you will certainly be happier here than wandering about the streets, and you will be very comfortable when you get your house built. A carpenter lives quite near you, and I will ask him to lend you any tools that you may need. Now, let me see how well you can manage everything. Necessity is the mother of invention. Have you got the horn?'

'Thank you, sir, thank you!' exclaimed Cecil, seizing Mr. Raimond's hand and raising it to his lips. 'Oh, sir, you have made me so happy! But, Fox, come here, that we may be happy together,' added the grateful child, as he bent down and fondly caressed his dog. 'You and I have both suffered, and both found that the good God never forsakes His creatures. When I was desolate and in despair you ran to me wounded and bleeding. I took care of you, and from the time I gave you the first

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piece of bread, which you returned by giving me some water, we have each been sustained by the other ; and now without you I should not be here.'

' You are satisfied, then ?' asked Mr. Raimond. ' Now, little Robinson, good-bye ! I shall not see you for a long time. Farewell !'

As Cecil followed Mr. Raimond to his waggon, he noticed a woman at some distance, whom he thought he recognized as a friend. The woman, in her turn, when she perceived him, quickened her pace until they stood in front of each other. It was the blind man's daughter. She held in her apron something that moved about and made a prolonged cooing sound.

Chapter XIX

The Pair of Pigeons

' AT last I have found you, my little friend,' said the young girl to Cecil. ' My father sent me, with many thanks, to tell you he would never forget the important service you have rendered him, and he will return the ten shillings you lent him as soon as possible. You may depend on him, my little friend.'

' He owes me nothing,' replied Cecil. ' Mr. Raimond was so kind as——'

' To give you ten shillings,' interrupted Mr. Raimond gaily, ' but not to pay you the blind man's debt. My child, I see that you have no notion of the value of money.'

Cecil did not reply, and the girl, opening her apron, disclosed a beautiful pair of white pigeons, so young that they had yet but few feathers. She presented them to Cecil, and said :

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‘I wish to give you these in token of my gratitude, my little friend. Will you accept them?’

‘These pigeons for me!’ exclaimed Cecil—‘for me, Mary! And what shall I do with them?’

‘Zounds! eat them for your dinner,’ replied Mr. Raimond, jumping into his waggon. ‘Good-bye, Cecil! Take good care of my land; don’t let anything be stolen; and if you hear the slightest noise in the night blow the horn. Do not be afraid. Better call the guards uselessly than let me lose a pear. Good-bye!’

And Mr. Raimond whipped up his horses, who started off at full gallop, thus preventing Cecil from making any further acknowledgment.

‘Will you come in and rest a moment, Mary?’ said Cecil, leading Mary inside the gate.

‘What! Does all this land belong to you, my little friend?’ exclaimed Mary, as she entered.

‘I am only to take care of it,’ replied Cecil. Then he added, laughing: ‘I would like to have you rest yourself, but I have no chairs.’

‘Here is an excellent seat, better than any chair,’ said the girl, sitting down on the grass.

Cecil sat down beside her. ‘Will you allow me to hold your pigeons in my hand a moment?’

‘They are yours,’ said Mary, putting them on his arm; ‘but you will not eat them, will you?’

‘No, indeed,’ replied Cecil. ‘I will take care of them and feed them. By-the-by, Mary, what do you give them to eat?’

‘Generally they live on seeds, but I only give them bread. Have you got any bread?’

‘No.’

‘You have at least money to buy some?’

‘Yes, indeed,’ said Cecil, jingling his money in his

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pocket. 'If I only knew where there was a baker! I feel hungry now.'

'Wait, and I will look for one,' said Mary.

Mary soon returned with a four-pound loaf of bread and a bunch of radishes.

'This is my treat,' said she. 'I got the money from selling four of my pigeons yesterday morning.'

'We ought to have a table,' said Cecil.

Mary looked around, and, seeing the pile of planks, she ran and selected a wide and short one; then, wiping it with her apron, she put it across a large stone, placed the bread and radishes on it, and, sitting down on the grass, said: 'Here is a table, my little friend. See what a nice table!'

Cecil seated himself, and Fox took his station in front of him. The pigeons also were on the ground, and they all ate with great enjoyment.

After a few minutes Mary exclaimed: 'Oh, we have nothing to drink! I forgot that we must drink. My brother would not have forgotten that. I have a goblet,' said she, taking a pewter mug out of her pocket; 'but with what shall we fill it?'

'Fox,' said Cecil, addressing the dog and showing the mug, 'where is there any water? You go and find some.' Then, turning to Mary, he added: 'Fox is very quick at that.'

At sight of the mug Fox immediately began to rub his nose along the ground. Suddenly he ran towards the gate of the enclosure. Cecil went after him, opened the gate, and followed the dog until they came to the side of a fountain! Cecil quenched his thirst, gave Fox a drink, then, rinsing out the mug, he refilled it with water and carried it carefully towards the enclosure.

Mary took the mug, drank part of the water herself, then gave some to the pigeons.



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‘While you were away,’ said she to Cecil, ‘I have thought of something. You have enough grass here to feed a hundred rabbits.’

‘If you have any rabbits, good Mary, it is at your service.’

‘I have none ; but the gardener who employs me to sell his herbs has several. Will you allow me to gather a little grass for them ?’

‘Certainly, with pleasure,’ replied Cecil ; ‘and I will assist you.’

Cecil and Mary ran frolicking about, trying which could gather the largest bunch.

When Mary’s apron was full, she said : ‘Now I must bid you good-morning, my little friend. If I have a moment to spare, I will come to see you to-morrow evening. Keep my mug ; it will be more useful to you than it is to me.’

Cecil thanked her, and followed her to the gate. On his return he glanced around his large tract of land, and said to himself :

‘Here I am, like Robinson Crusoe, in my desert island, with this difference : that Robinson’s island was surrounded by water, and mine is encircled by stones. But I have more companions than he had, for I have a dog and two pigeons, so I am happier than he !’ Cecil was unaccustomed to solitude, and, though it did not alarm him, it made him feel a little melancholy. He began talking to his dog and then to the pigeons, and caressed each alternately. The setting sun reminded him that he had prepared no shelter for the night, and he was soon busily at work with the planks.

He selected the corner of the wall pointed out by Mr. Raimond, and began to make the floor by placing boards of equal length close together. Then he tried to stand

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them upright to form the two sides, which were wanting, but he found this very difficult, and, as the night was fast approaching, he determined to sleep with only the blue sky for his roof.

Having come to this resolution, after eating a little bread, he gathered some grass, and formed a nest for his pigeons. Then he laid himself down upon the planks which he had arranged for the floor of his house, but he found them very hard.

‘Oh, what would I not give for a bundle of hay or straw!’

By chance his eyes fell on the nest of his pigeons, and he exclaimed: ‘Why can I not make a bed for myself as I have done for my pigeons?’ and he gathered some grass and strewed it in thick layers on the planks. Once more he lay down, and, with Fox at his feet, he soon fell into a sound slumber.

Chapter XX

The Ten Shillings begin to Gather Interest

IN the morning when Cecil awoke he felt stiff and bruised. He fed his dog and pigeons, and then reflected how he should provide himself with a more comfortable lodging for the next night.

‘These boards will never do,’ said he. ‘I have plenty of different kinds of stones here, and after helping the masons and looking at them for two weeks, I ought to know how to pile them together. But I must have some mortar. Where shall I find any?’

He went to the fountain for a drink, and accidentally met a company of masons as they were going to their work. He followed them with the intention of asking

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their advice. On his way he thought of everything that he should say to excite their interest. He reached the hotel of the garden Beaujon at the same moment as the masons.

‘Sir,’ said he, addressing the youngest one, which made all the others look around, ‘will you do me a little favour?’

‘I?’ replied the man insolently.

‘You, or one of these other gentlemen,’ returned Cecil, a little disconcerted. ‘I want to build a house in that enclosure over there, and if you would be so kind——’

‘As to build it for you?’ interrupted the mason whom Cecil had just addressed.

‘Shall we make it four stories high, or seven?’ asked another.

‘Will you have it surrounded by a colonnade?’ asked a third, ‘with gilded cornices? What style of architecture do you like best?’

‘A colonnade like that of the Louvre?’ demanded a fourth.

‘He wants a villa, I suppose, like a lord’s!’ said a fifth.

‘A strong fortress!’ said a sixth, ‘with battlements, turrets, and drawbridges, and surrounded by ditches of water—in the style of Francis the First.’

‘Or a palace, perhaps—who knows?’ added a seventh.

‘And how much, sir, will you pay the workmen?’ rejoined the first mason with a sneer, which drew forth a roar of laughter from the whole troop.

Bewildered by this burst of malicious merriment, Cecil remained a moment without replying; but soon taking courage, he looked up and said:

‘In this world we should all assist one another, gentlemen. I ask nothing without intending to compensate you, if it is in my power.’

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‘Admirable reasoning! The little fellow has become a preacher already. I admire him exceedingly,’ replied the youngest of the masons, who appeared to be the chief speaker. ‘Finish your sermon, venerable sir; go on, worthy pastor.’

‘I do not know how to build a house,’ said Cecil; ‘but I know how to read, write, and play on the violin.’

‘Very well, go and read, write, and play on the violin, and build your house with these accomplishments.’

‘You do not understand me,’ said Cecil, much disconcerted. ‘If any of you would like to learn to read, or write, or play on the violin, I will teach him, if in return he will lend me a hand in building my house.’

‘I will lend you a foot,’ said the youngest of the masons, advancing with a menacing gesture. But just as he was raising his foot, a young girl laid her hand upon his shoulder.

‘Are you not ashamed, brother,’ said she to him, ‘to attempt to beat a child—and *this* child above all others?’

‘Oh, it is Miss Mary! Good-morning, miss,’ said the masons, bowing politely to her.

‘Well, who is this child, that I should be afraid to touch him?’ asked Mary’s brother roughly.

‘Who is he?’ replied Mary with energy; and, seizing Cecil’s hand, she pressed it to her heart. ‘Who he is is no matter; but I will tell you what he has done, gentlemen.’

And, with a voice full of gratitude and emotion, Mary related the service Cecil had rendered her father. As she spoke, the countenances of all the masons became attentive and serious; they unconsciously drew nearer to the child, and regarded him with respect—almost with reverence. Tears filled their eyes when Mary told them

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how generously Cecil had given the ten shillings to her father, and they broke forth with one unanimous exclamation of—

‘Bravo! bravo! Shake hands with the fine little fellow! Pardon our rudeness; you are a brave and noble child; shake hands!’ And the coarse and brawny hands of the workmen were extended towards Cecil, who grasped them in turn.

One only of these men did not approach Cecil and offer his hand. His back was turned on his comrades, and he was sobbing and stamping his feet on the ground. It was Mary’s brother.

‘Well, Paul,’ said Mary kindly, ‘you repent having spent the money in drinking at the tavern while a stranger did not hesitate to deprive himself to succour your father—is it not so?’

‘Don’t speak to me,’ replied Paul roughly; ‘I am an unfortunate, miserable creature. I do not deserve to live, and I will throw myself into the first horse-pond I come across!’

‘Brother, it is very wicked for you to speak in that manner!’ said Mary.

‘It is both wicked and stupid, and he is a bad son to talk of drowning himself when he can work and earn money for his poor father,’ added one of the masons.

‘Young master,’ said the eldest of the masons, addressing himself to Cecil in a serious tone, ‘you live on the land belonging to Father Raimond, do you not? Very well, keep yourself quiet and contented, and after our work is finished here, as we shall still have three hours during which it is light enough to see, and as we are twenty of us, I shall be surprised if your house is not ready before night. You have rendered a great service to the poor father of one of our comrades; you are a brave boy, and

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all these men should work for you. Depend upon our coming to your assistance this evening.'

'Yes, depend on us,' said Paul; and Cecil offered his hand to him, but Paul drew back, saying: 'I do not deserve it.'

The masons were as good as their word, and towards sundown they arrived on Mr. Raimond's ground with their trowels, mortar, and everything necessary for building. Cecil showed them the corner he had selected, and they were soon busily employed.

It was delightful to see them work, they were all in such good humour. They made the two walls which were to form the square of the chamber as high as their heads, then covered them over the top with planks, upon which they placed some tiles.

'We will complete your house to-morrow,' said the masons to Cecil.

Chapter XXI

The Robbers

WHEN they bade Cecil good-evening, he entered his little house. He had not finished his supper when his attention was distracted by his dog, who stood on the outside of the house, barking and keeping his eyes fixed on one corner of the enclosure.

Cecil could perceive at the other end of the enclosure, by the pale light of the moon, two shadows, which moved towards the fruit-trees. Soon the shadows came nearer, and he could distinctly see two men. His first feeling, it must be acknowledged, was terror. His second impulse was to call for aid. But on whom should he call? He remembered the little horn. It was the only piece of

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furniture in his house, therefore he had no difficulty in finding it. He blew three long and clear notes, then, withdrawing into his house, awaited the result.

First he saw the robbers, apparently alarmed, running towards a part of the wall which was low and obscurely situated. A moment afterwards he heard the steps of the patrol and the cries, 'Who goes there? Reply, or we fire!' He then heard the firing of a pistol, and the same voices exclaim: 'We have caught them!'

Cecil went towards the gate, opened it, and beheld not far off a company of the National Guard surrounding two men of unprepossessing appearance.

One of the guards, whose dress designated him as a corporal, asked Cecil for an explanation.

'It was I,' said Cecil, 'who sounded the horn.'

'What! you are the child whose history my Uncle Raimond related to me, and who is to keep watch over his land?' inquired the corporal.

'Yes, sir,' replied Cecil. 'Come, will you go with me and see my house?'

'Your house!' said Mr. Raimond's nephew. 'Why, if you have a tree to perch on in my uncle's tract of ground you are fortunate.'

'Come, come and see,' replied Cecil.

And a company of the guards, the corporal at their head, followed Cecil.

'Is that where you sleep?' exclaimed they all, at sight of the naked walls and the grass scattered on the floor.

'To be sure,' replied the child gaily; then he added, shaking his head: 'it is just ten days since the death of my poor uncle. I should have thought myself very unhappy during his life to have had no better dwelling than this. But now, after having had cause to dread passing a night in the street, and being taken up by the town

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criers and carried off to prison as a vagabond, I thank God that I have this place to rest in, gentlemen.'

'Poor child!' said they all, much interested by the words of Cecil, but still more by the artless simplicity with which they were delivered. 'But how does it happen that you are alone in Paris?'

Cecil replied, as usual, that he did not wish to tell them, because he must not speak ill of his relations.

'Gentlemen,' said the corporal, 'we must do something for this child.'

'I am not rich, gentlemen,' said one of them. 'My business is making shoes, and I will give him a pair, as I see those he has on are much the worse for wear. In the meanwhile here are five shillings, corporal.'

'And I,' said another, 'will send him a bedstead and a mattress to-morrow.'

'Here is my offering, corporal.'

'And mine!'

'And mine!'

The corporal took the money from all of them and presented it to Cecil, who drew back, blushing.

'I do not want it,' said he—'I do not want it.'

'Take it,' said the corporal.

'No; keep it, gentlemen,' said the child. 'If you will give me work, then I might earn this money, and would not mind taking it.'

'But what can you do?' asked the corporal. 'Do you know how to read and write?'

'Yes,' replied Cecil.

'And can you spell well?'

'I only make errors in proper names,' replied the child.

'Well, I am a printer,' said the corporal. 'One of my correctors of the proof-sheets has weak eyes, and if you

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would like to be his assistant, he will give you instruction. Come early to-morrow morning to No. 16, Cadron Street, and you shall have work. In the meantime accept these twenty shillings ; take them as a loan, if not as a gift, and you can return them when you are able.'

'As a loan, then, I will take them,' said Cecil ; 'but I can assure you that I will pay them back.'

The guard then shook hands with Cecil, and bade him good-night.

Chapter XXII

How Ten Shillings, without being put out at Interest,
can Increase to a Large Capital

Cecil rose early the next morning. The idea of being employed in a printing-office had kept him awake half the night. After breakfasting on some of the bread and radishes which yet remained, sharing his meal with his dog and pigeons, he took his way to the printing-office, accompanied by Fox.

He had walked only a few steps when he met the corporal, who was just getting into a coach.

'You come in good time,' said the corporal. 'Jump in, and I will see you safely installed in the office myself.'

Cecil seated himself beside his new patron. Fox followed the coach, and in a quarter of an hour's time they arrived at the largest printing establishment in Paris.

'Mr. Germain,' said the printer, introducing Cecil to an old man, who wore a pair of green spectacles, 'here is a little boy who will aid you in correcting proofs. You can tell me by this evening whether he is capable of doing the business.'

'I will tell you well enough before an hour,' replied

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Mr. Germain crossly ; and then he muttered : ‘ The idea of bringing such a child into this large printing-office ! Come here, little boy,’ added he, conducting Cecil to a private enclosure behind a grating, situated in the middle of the composing-room. ‘ Correct that sheet for me. Zounds, lad ! It isn’t to be corrected like a page of writing. You do not know the signs, then ?’

‘ It is the first time I have ever been in a printing-office, sir,’ replied Cecil, in so sad and sweet a tone that the old man replied rather more kindly :

‘ Come, sit down, then. It is quite an alphabet to learn. Whose dog is that ?’ added he, looking at Fox, who, with his tail between his legs, had drawn himself up in as small a compass as possible in one corner of the room.

‘ He is mine,’ replied Cecil. ‘ Pray do not hurt him, sir. Fox will not be in your way at all, I can assure you. I wish that you had as much need of my dog and me as I have of you, sir.’

Cecil was so tractable, so polite, and so amiable, that before the end of the day he and Mr. Germain had become excellent friends. Cecil related his adventures, and Mr. Germain offered to let him board at his house, or rather, to eat there, for he said that his wife loved children and dogs very much.

‘ But I have very little money to pay my board,’ replied Cecil.

‘ You can earn two shillings a day here,’ said Mr. Germain.

Cecil replied in great astonishment : ‘ Two shillings !’

Mr. Germain replied : ‘ I get six shillings myself, and soon you may make as much. If you give my wife one shilling a day, you shall have breakfast and supper for yourself and your dog. How will that suit you ?’

‘ Very well indeed, I think, sir.’

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Precisely as Mr. Germain had promised, Cecil was engaged in the printing-office of Mr. Raimond's nephew for two shillings a day, and he was introduced to Mrs. Germain, who paid so much attention to him and to his dog at the table that the husband complained of neglect.

Chapter XXIII

The Surprise

It was not yet night when Cecil took leave of his new friends, and, with a light heart and lighter steps, followed by Fox, ran down the long walks of the Champs Élysées.

As he approached his dwelling he encountered Mary, who appeared to be awaiting his return. She held in her hand a handkerchief folded like a cravat.

'Will you allow me to bandage your eyes, Cecil?' said she, with so playful and happy a tone that Cecil held forward his head, replying :

'Are you going to play blindman's-buff, Mary? We should wait till we get inside of the enclosure.'

Without giving any explanation, the girl bandaged Cecil's eyes, and, taking him by the hand, led him on so fast that he had almost to run to keep up with her.

As they approached Mr. Raimond's land Cecil thought he heard smothered laughter, low whisperings, and a shuffling of many feet. When he felt the floor of his hut under his feet, the bandage fell from his eyes, and he looked around without recognizing the place. The rough and naked walls were no longer to be seen. They were covered with pretty flowered paper. Instead of the great square place without doors, or windows, or furniture, now appeared a beautiful room, well closed, and in which nothing was wanting. At the right was an iron bedstead,

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furnished with a mattress, a bolster, and a coverlet ; at the head of the bed was a pretty washstand, supplied with towels ; and at the foot was a little cupboard, from which escaped a savoury smell that proved this piece of furniture would not be the least useful in the room. Added to all these there were two chairs and a wooden table. Cecil stood motionless for some minutes, doubting whether he was awake or dreaming.

A burst of noisy and merry laughter, and a mischievous pinch from Mary, roused him from his stupefaction, and convinced him that he was not dreaming—that the vision was all reality ! He beheld assembled around him the masons, on the arm of one of whom leaned the blind man ; and near them a group of young gentlemen, whom he did not immediately recognize, but in the midst of whom he noticed his patron the printer.

‘ Well, what do you say to all this ? ’ asked Mr. Raymond’s nephew, advancing towards him. ‘ Do you not think that the ten shillings you gave to this blind man have been sufficiently profitable to you ? Look ! All the things here are yours. They are sent to you by these gentlemen themselves who form the patrol with whom you talked last night. The linen and the dishes were sent to you by their sisters. You will find in the under part of the washstand two pairs of sheets, a dozen towels, and clothes for your use, for we happen to have brothers of your size. Here is a basket of fine peaches that you must eat with these brave men who built your house ; and, as I have invited the blind man, his son and his daughter to supper, you will find plenty with which to regale them in that cupboard. Now, good-bye, my brave boy. To-morrow we must go to work again.’

Cecil seized the hand which the printer offered, and exclaimed : ‘ Oh, sir, sir ! ’ This was all he could say,

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but his tears and the expression of his face were more eloquent than words.

The gentlemen withdrew, and Mary, who doubtless only waited for this movement to open the cupboard, now quickly turned the key in the lock, and the doors flew open and displayed a large pie, a roasted turkey, and two large loaves of bread.

Cecil said to the masons : ' Here is plenty for all. Come, sit down, and eat with us.'

' But there are only two chairs,' said one of the masons.

' One for the blind man and the other for Miss Mary,' replied Cecil.

' It is a fine evening,' said Mary ; ' let us sup in the open air. Carry the table outside, and we can place planks over stones to make benches.'

' Bravo ! bravo !' cried the masons in executing Mary's orders. In a moment the table was set outside, the seats arranged, and the best one given to the blind man. All was gaiety and happiness, and never did any of the party enjoy a heartier or more jovial repast. Fox travelled all around the table, receiving food from the hand of every one. And never did a dog so wag his tail as little Fox did during that merry meal.

At nine o'clock the party separated, and Cecil re-entered his little room alone. After having put everything in order, he threw himself on his knees before the bed and thanked God with great earnestness for all the blessings He had showered upon him for some days past. Then, for the first time since he had been in Paris, the poor child stretched his delicate limbs on a good bed.

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Chapter XXIV

In which Something is told about Fox

CÉCIL continued to work in the printing-office, and, with the assistance of Mary's brother, cultivated his land, planted potatoes and salad, took good care of the fruit-trees, repaired the wall, and made so many improvements that, at the expiration of four months, when Mr. Raimond returned from his travels, he did not recognize his own place.

We will now pass over the next two years, at the end of which time an unfortunate event occurred, which I will now relate.

One fine but very cold day in the month of February, Cecil, followed by Fox, went out for a walk. Could my little readers have seen Cecil, they would scarcely have recognized in the handsome and healthy-looking boy of fourteen the pale and delicate child who, two years before, had been abandoned under the chestnut-tree in the Tuileries.

After walking about for some hours, Cecil sat down on the steps of a house and amused himself by looking at the train of carriages, with their liveried footmen, as they drove past, and by watching the richly dressed persons who stepped into them.

It was getting late, and Cecil contemplated returning home to light his little fire, and read a book which Mr. Germain had lent him, when he heard someone scream, 'Fox! Fox!' Cecil started. The cry had proceeded from an old lady seated in a carriage, the door of which was still open.

As Cecil was looking around him to divine what kind of dog it was that bore the same name as his own, he saw



Saw Fox, his Fox, make one bound
and jump into the carriage.

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Fox—*his* Fox—make one bound and jump into the carriage where sat the lady. The door was closed in an instant, and the carriage drove off.

When the first emotion of surprise was over Cecil thought of following the carriage, but, before he had made up his mind what to do, the carriage was out of sight.

Cecil was overwhelmed with grief. 'I have lost my dog!' exclaimed he, so bitterly that everybody turned around and looked at him. 'I have lost my dog! Fox, Fox! Come back! Where are you?' But he called in vain. Fox had perhaps disappeared for ever. How should he ever find such a little dog in that great city? If he had only looked particularly at the lady, or the carriage, or the horses, or the footmen, even, then he might have come and sat on the steps every day, and if either the lady or her footman appeared, he could request them to return his dog. But now what was he to do? The past seemed like a dream; the present was a sad reality, for he felt that he was alone. Sorrowfully he returned home. Whenever he met a little black dog on his way he involuntarily called out, 'Fox!' and at every new disappointment his grief was redoubled.

Everything now looked gloomy in his pretty little cottage without Fox. Cecil noticed neither his pigeons nor his rabbits. All his thoughts were engrossed by Fox. He could not eat, nor sleep, nor take any pleasure without him. 'Oh, he was more than a dog to me!' exclaimed Cecil: 'he was my companion, my brother, my friend!'

Sleep visited not poor Cecil's eyes that night, and when morning came his grief seemed to be even greater than the preceding evening. Every moment he missed his dog more and more. Silently he fed his rabbits and pigeons, and set out for the printing-office. In passing before the gardener's house where Mary worked, instead

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of the gay and happy 'good-morning' with which he generally accosted her, he held out his hand and could only say : ' I have lost my dog, Mary !'

'What a misfortune !' replied the girl, deeply sympathizing with his grief, without attempting to offer him any consolation.

He arrived at the printing-office, and to everybody who addressed him he replied only with the words which were uppermost in his heart and on his lips, '*I have lost my dog !*'

'This child must have another dog,' said Mr. Germain to the workmen.

'No no,' replied Cecil ; 'not another ! I only want the one I have lost. I could not love another dog as I have loved Fox.'

Chapter XXV

The Beggar on the Champs Élysées

It was seven o'clock in the evening. The moon shone brilliantly, the ground was covered with snow, and it was very cold, when Cecil returned home. He passed by the coffee-house in which he had played on the violin for the old man. He was unfortunate then, but his dog was with him, and he was less sad than now.

Standing near the coffee-house, on the Champs Élysées, he saw an individual who appeared familiar to him. It was a pale and thin young man, without a hat, shivering with the cold, wrapped in an old coat, which showed his form so plainly that one might well have imagined that beneath it he wore no other clothes. In this young man's features Cecil traced a resemblance to his cousin. But what an idea ! The son of his uncle—the rich heir of Mr. Thomas, the owner of so many houses and vineyards

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in Bordeaux—here—in Paris—and in the most miserable and destitute state, shivering in the street ! No, it was impossible ! Notwithstanding the severe cold, Cecil stood still with his eyes riveted upon the person who so strikingly resembled his cousin.

At this moment a third person crossed the Champs Élysées, and Cecil saw the wretched young man run towards the stranger and hold out his hand.

‘ I have nothing for you,’ replied the person thus applied to roughly.

‘ I shall die of hunger,’ said the young man, who, no doubt encouraged by the solitude which reigned all around, put his hand on the man’s arm, and held him fast, as it were in perfect desperation.

That voice ! It was his cousin’s voice ! Cecil knew it too well to forget it ; and, grasping the arm of the unhappy young man, he exclaimed : ‘ Augustus, what are you doing ?’

‘ Augustus !’ repeated the person addressed, trembling with alarm. ‘ Who calls my name ? Who knows me ?’

And, in his surprise, unconscious of what he did, he loosened his hold of the stranger, who, glad to be released, hastened away.

‘ Augustus, what are you doing ?’ again asked Cecil, but this time in a sad and reproachful tone, and fixing his eyes on his cousin with an expression of mingled astonishment and horror

The first feeling of alarm over, the man, in his turn, looked at Cecil, but not recognizing his voice nor his healthy face and robust form, he said roughly :

‘ Who are you, and what do you want of me ?’

‘ What ! Do you not remember me, Augustus ?’

‘ I never saw you before,’ said Augustus, making a movement to go away.

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‘I am Cecil.’

This name appeared to wound the young man to the soul.

‘Cecil!’ repeated he with terror.

‘Yes, the nephew of Mr. Thomas—Cecil, your cousin, whom you abandoned in the Tuileries. But what brings you to Paris? and what are you doing here?’ added Cecil kindly.

As Augustus did not reply, feeling, no doubt, too much humbled and confused, or not having an answer ready, Cecil continued:

‘It is very cold here; let us go to your house or mine, that we may talk together, will you?’

‘To *my* house! I have no house,’ said Augustus in a smothered voice. ‘Do you think if I had a home that I should be here, at this hour, prowling about the streets of Paris? Do you think if I had eaten to-day I would have begged?’

‘Speak lower, Augustus,’ said Cecil; but he added with kindness: ‘Well, come home with me, cousin.’

Augustus followed, without making any remark, his head bent down, and his frame shivering with the cold.

Cecil thought over this strange meeting with his cousin—now a mendicant on the Champs Élysées—until his little brain was perplexed, but he could not solve the mystery. As for Augustus, he was trying to invent some story which would satisfy his cousin’s curiosity.

They at length reached the little cottage, and, when Cecil had lighted the candle, an exclamation of surprise burst from Augustus at sight of the perfect neatness and order which reigned throughout the room.

‘Where are we?’ asked he.

‘In my house, cousin,’ said Cecil, doing the honours with a hospitality worthy of his kind heart. ‘Wait, and I will light my fire, and that will warm you. You are

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hungry, are you not ? Open the cupboard. What will you have ? Here is bread, a pot of preserved grapes, and a little wine ; but do not stint yourself—eat all. I am not hungry. I am too full of grief to think of eating,’ added he, drawing a deep sigh.

‘ Whose place is this ? ’ asked Augustus, eating with great anxiety.

‘ It is mine, or pretty much the same as mine,’ answered Cecil.

‘ What ! ’ said Augustus in astonishment. ‘ This land belongs to you ? This house and furniture are yours ? ’

‘ No, this land is not mine,’ replied Cecil. ‘ I am only kept here to guard it. The house some of my friends built for me ; still, it can hardly be called mine, either ; but the furniture and everything in this room belong to me. But, cousin, tell me something about yourself. How happens it that you, who were so rich, are in this forlorn condition ? ’

‘ Oh, it is a very sad history,’ replied Augustus.

‘ It is not late,’ said Cecil. ‘ Pray relate it to me.’

‘ Never ask a man, Cecil, how he has managed to spend the whole of his fortune in two years. It is very easy, I can assure you. Listen, and I will tell you. I had new servants who stole from me, and friends who borrowed my money. I gave parties ; I kept carriages and horses ; then I got in debt by bad speculations, and one morning I found myself dispossessed of all my houses and my vineyards, with only five hundred pounds in my purse.’

‘ I should like very well to have five hundred pounds ; I should think myself rich,’ replied Cecil. ‘ You have, then, five hundred pounds, Augustus ? ’

‘ Hear me to the end. I knew that gaming houses were abolished at Paris, but I had heard my father speak of speculations in stocks, by which enormous sums were

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made. I came to Paris, risked my five hundred pounds, and lost them. Since then I have had to sell my clothes one by one to pay my board and get food, until yesterday, not being able to pay for a small room I occupied, they turned me out of the house and retained the rest of my linen. When you met me I had not eaten anything for fourteen hours.'

'How fortunate that I met you !' said Cecil.

'You do not, then, bear malice against me ?' asked Augustus in surprise.

'Why ?' said Cecil. 'I felt angry with you as long as I thought you were rich ; now that you are unfortunate, I pity you, but bear you no malice. If you will recall the words of your poor father, Augustus—that he who does evil receives evil in return, and he that does good finds good in return—you will see how you have deserved your misfortunes and I my prosperity.'

'How stupid you are !' exclaimed Augustus, shrugging his shoulders. 'If you had not met that good man, Mr. Raimond, who made you guardian over his land, and those kind masons who built your house, tell me, if you can, where you would have lived until now.'

Cecil replied quickly : 'If I had not assisted the old blind man I should not have met Mr. Raimond, and the comrades of the blind man's son would not have built me this room.'

'Say, rather,' replied Augustus, 'that without your dog all this good fortune would not have befallen you.'

'But it was from compassion that I took the dog.'

'Oh, make it all out to suit yourself,' said Augustus, who, in the spirit of all envious persons, would not acknowledge to himself the cause of his misery and of his cousin's happiness. 'After all,' added he, 'you are not so well off as to justify your talking so proudly.'

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‘And what more do I want?’ exclaimed Cecil with animation. ‘I have a house quite large enough for my use; I have friends—yes, Augustus, the old blind man’s family are excellent friends to me: the old man gives me good advice; his wife washes and mends my clothes; his daughter, a kind and grateful girl, has given me a pair of pigeons and a pair of rabbits, of which I am very fond; and his son, a rather unsteady young man at first, but now quite changed, often comes, after he has got through his work, to help me plough and sow my ground. I have a situation by which I make three pounds a month, and what more do I want? Ah! except my dog, to be sure,’ added he, with a sigh.

But just as Cecil said these words he thought he heard in the stillness of the night the barking of a dog which he well knew. ‘Augustus! Augustus!’ cried he, his voice much changed by emotion, and running to open the door.

A moment afterwards Cecil clasped Fox to his heart.

Chapter XXVI

The Placard

‘It is strange, cousin, that Fox don’t like you,’ said Cecil the next morning, perceiving that the dog continually whined and looked suspiciously at Augustus.

‘Do you mean to say that dogs love and hate?’ asked Augustus.

‘Is it not proof sufficient that this poor dog who was carried away from me, and whom I thought lost, has come back to me of his own accord? Have you not been witness of his joy at seeing me? But let us think of your affairs now, Augustus.’

‘I thank you for your hospitality,’ said Augustus while

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dressing himself, and brushing his old coat to make it look less soiled and dusty. 'I am going to see some friends. Have you a cravat and a shirt to lend me?'

'Yes,' replied Cecil, selecting his handsomest cravat and best shirt, and presenting them to him.

'And some money with which I may buy my breakfast?' asked Augustus.

Cecil took a little leather purse out of his mattress, and opening it, said: 'I have thirty shillings. I will share them with you, Augustus. Here are fifteen. I am very sorry not to be able to offer you more.'

Augustus, who did not anticipate his cousin's generosity, was much surprised, and thanked him quite warmly, saying: 'You are a very good friend, Cecil. But I will return you this money soon—very soon,' added he, taking the money as though it were a loan, by way of easing his pride.

After Cecil had given his pigeons and rabbits their breakfast, he invited his cousin to accompany him, and they went out together.

In approaching the Place de la Concorde, the two cousins saw a placard posted on a tree in the Champs Élysées, before which several people stopped a moment and then walked on. 'What is lost?' asked the cousins, following the example of others, and stopping to read. But instead of passing on, as if by one impulse, they stood transfixed to the spot.

Augustus read the notice aloud:

'FIFTY SHILLINGS REWARD

FOR THE RECOVERY OF A LITTLE ENGLISH SPANIEL

'The dog is black, with a white spot on his breast and on each foot. His ears are very long, almost sweeping the ground, and his name is Fox.

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‘This dog had been lost for two years, but was found on the street some days ago, before the church of Saint Roch, and made his escape last evening.

‘If anybody who sees the above-mentioned dog will please bring him to No. 37, Lafitte Street, to Madame Marbœuf, he shall receive the promised reward, and even more if required.’

‘Madame Marbœuf!’ said Augustus thoughtfully. ‘It is singular.’

‘My poor dog!’ said Cecil, taking Fox tenderly in his arms.

The cousins walked away from the placard, and separated from each other, both of them absorbed in thought.

Cecil went to the printing-office, and immediately related all that had occurred to Mr. Germain, and asked his advice.

‘My advice is, my child,’ replied Mr. Germain, ‘that since you cannot keep that dog—seeing that it does not belong to you—my advice is that you immediately return it to the owner.’

‘Never, never, of my own accord,’ said Cecil, ‘could I part with Fox.’

‘Reflect, my child,’ said Mr. Germain, ‘that, apart from receiving the reward, which it would be very nice to have, and which you could double if you chose, you will be accused of stealing the dog.’

‘Stealing!’ exclaimed Cecil.

‘But, my child,’ said Mr. Germain, ‘there is not much difference between stealing and keeping what belongs to another.’

‘Then I will no longer hesitate,’ said Cecil, taking Fox in his arms and weeping over him. Then, stopping at

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the door of the printing-office and turning to his comrades, who looked sorrowfully after him, he said : ' Do you think I might ask the lady to let me buy her dog ?'

' You have a perfect right to ask,' replied one of the compositors.

' And she has a perfect right to refuse you,' said Mr. Germain.

With a sad heart Cecil went on his way, carrying the poor animal, who looked up to his master as if he anticipated his fate, and supplicated him not to part with him.

Chapter XXVII

A Disappointment

CECIL arrived at the house designated in the placard. As he ascended the steps he met his cousin, and hastened to join him.

' What do you come here for ?' asked Cecil.

' And for what do you come ?' returned Augustus.

' I !' said Cecil, and he looked sorrowfully at the little dog in his arms.

' Ah ! you come for the promised reward,' said Augustus.

It would be difficult to express Cecil's indignation at this remark. Without saying a word—for he felt if his cousin could thus judge him he was not capable of either conceiving or appreciating his conduct—he knocked at the door.

' Cecil,' cried Augustus, ' do not speak of me to that lady—do you understand ?'

' What an idea !' exclaimed Cecil, and he asked the doorkeeper for Madame Marbœuf.

' Go to the first door on the left,' said the doorkeeper. ' Oh, you bring back her dog ! Are you not glad to

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have found it ? You will get the reward. I never meet with such good luck.'

Cecil bowed to all the woman's remarks without replying. He went to the next door, as she directed, and rang. A liveried footman opened the door, and, on seeing the dog, exclaimed, like the doorkeeper :

'Oh, you have brought Madame Marbœuf's dog. She will be delighted !'

And leading Cecil through a suite of rooms, the magnificence of which quite escaped his attention, the servant ushered him into a little boudoir, where an old lady was seated in a large arm-chair before a cheerful fire, embroidering with worsteds.

The footman said, as he opened the door : 'Madame, here is Fox.'

'Fox ! Fox !' exclaimed the lady, throwing down her work, and extending her arms to the dog. 'Fox, do you not remember your mistress ? You ungrateful little wretch !'

But Fox and his master both remained standing in the doorway.

'Fox,' said Madame Marbœuf tenderly, 'what is the matter with you, that you do not know me ? Here is one of the little cakes that you used to like so much.'

Fox wagged his tail in token of his thanks, but did not advance a step towards his old mistress.

During the few minutes that Madame Marbœuf coaxed Fox, Cecil surveyed the lady. She was about sixty years of age. Her countenance was full, unfurrowed by disease or care, and bore traces of great beauty. Its expression was neither stern nor mild, but it was cold.

Cecil ventured to say :

'You see, Madame, the dog grieves at our separation as much as I do.'

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For the first time Madame Marbœuf looked towards the child who came to restore her dog.

‘I thank you,’ said she. ‘Leave the dog.’ Then, turning to the servant, she added : ‘Peter, give fifty shillings to this child. Go with him, my little friend.’

Seeing that Cecil did not appear inclined to obey, she added, in the same calm tone : ‘Is the reward not sufficient, and do you wish it increased ?’

‘I wish to speak to you, Madame,’ said Cecil, endeavouring to repress his tears.

‘What hinders you ? Speak on,’ said the lady.

‘Madame,’ said Cecil timidly, ‘let me keep Fox. Fox is my friend, my brother ! Fox is everything to me, madame. I am a poor, forsaken child. I have no family. If you knew, Madame—oh, I entreat you to let me keep Fox !’

‘Well, this is a strange child !’ said Madame Marbœuf, perfectly unmoved. Then she added, smiling kindly : ‘I am sorry for you, child ; but this dog is mine, and I choose to keep him. Go with Peter ; ask as much as you choose, and he will pay you anything in reason.’

‘But I only want Fox, Madame ; I do not care for anything but Fox !’ said Cecil, no longer able to restrain his grief. ‘Oh, do not refuse him to me ! You are rich ; you have a house, servants, and children, perhaps—you have everything you want—and I have only Fox ! See, Madame, how the poor animal looks at me ! If he could speak, I am sure he would beg you not to separate us. Oh, Madame, have pity on us both !’

Without appearing in the least degree affected by this touching appeal, Madame Marbœuf coldly turned to her servant and said : ‘Peter, take this child away, and give him five pounds. Go, my friend ; five pounds will be of much more use to you than a dog.’

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‘*You*, Madame, perhaps might think so,’ said Cecil, who had become bold through vexation, ‘but I might not agree with you. Since you think that money can replace a friend, sell me your dog—sell him to me. How much do you wish for him? If I have not the sum required, I can work, Madame. I will earn it and bring it to you. For how much will you sell him, Madame?’

‘Was there ever such a queer child?’ exclaimed the lady. ‘Peter, take this boy away and give him five pounds, as I told you.’

Cecil attempted to reply, but Madame Marbœuf prevented him. ‘Silence! Not a word more—you have said enough,’ said she, so positively that he did not venture to open his lips, but followed Peter without even looking back at the poor dog, which his mistress held on her lap, and who whined piteously when the door closed on his young benefactor.

As Cecil was disconsolately leaving the house without asking for the reward, the servant called out to him: ‘Well, are you going without the five pounds? Wait till I count them out to you.’

‘Thank you; I do not wish them,’ said Cecil, leaving the house. ‘I have not earned them, or I have not well earned them,’ called Cecil, looking back, ‘for before evening your mistress’s dog will return to my house.’

Saying these words, he bowed politely to the servant, and walked away. He did not return to the printing-office, but, after walking a short distance, seated himself on a step and began to whistle.

‘Are you not going to your printing-office to-day?’ asked Augustus, whom Cecil had not observed in turning down the street.

‘No; I intend passing the day here,’ replied Cecil.

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‘The fool!’ muttered Augustus between his teeth, and hastily walking away.

Cecil was too much absorbed in his own thoughts to notice his words, and sat still whistling.

Chapter XXVIII

The Printers and the Five Pounds

Fox, who had escaped from his former mistress out of love for his young master, when he heard Cecil whistle, surmounted every obstacle to obey the summons. Cecil had calculated upon this, and he was more pleased than surprised when, after half an hour, Fox, overjoyed and out of breath, leaped upon him.

Cecil returned to the printing-office, and when the old proof-reader beheld him enter, accompanied by his dog, he shook his head and said severely: ‘Then you had not sufficient resolution to give back the dog? That was not right, young man; you have not behaved well.’

Cecil, to exculpate himself, simply related what had taken place within the last hour. Instantly all the printers, compositors, and men employed in the office gathered around him.

‘I would have kept the dog,’ said one.

‘I would have taken the five pounds,’ said another.

‘I would have spoken my mind to the old lady,’ said a third.

‘Ah!’ replied Cecil, ‘it is not such an easy matter to talk to an old lady who looks very proud, and speaks in a peremptory tone that seems to forbid an answer. For my part, I could not keep from crying, and entreated her to permit me to retain the dog.’

‘That was well done; and what did she say?’

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‘She offered me more money, and seemed to think that that should compensate me for the loss of my little dog—my dear Fox—my best friend!’

‘And why had you not the wit to offer her the five pounds if she would only let you keep the dog?’ asked the proof-reader.

‘That is exactly what I did, and she laughed in my face.’

‘That was because she supposed you had not five pounds to give,’ said a compositor named Andrew. ‘Now, if you had only showed them to her——’

‘I could not show her what is not mine to show,’ answered Cecil. ‘But I told her I would earn them, and that I would pay her whatever sum she chose to ask.’

‘That would not do! That would never do!’ exclaimed several of the printers at once. ‘A person can resist a promise, but if he only sees the money glittering before him, the temptation is too great.’

‘But I have not five pounds—I have only fifteen shillings,’ replied Cecil despondingly.

‘And would you willingly give the money for the sake of recovering your dog?’ questioned Gaspard.

‘That I would! I will give the fifteen shillings that I shall receive next week, and the week after, and the week after that, and after that, until the hundred is made up. Oh, that I would, right gladly, to feel that Fox was mine!’

‘Very well. I will arrange everything for you,’ said Gaspard, jumping upon Mr. Germain’s tall stool, that he might command the attention of the workmen, and then addressing them thus: ‘Comrades! our friend here—and he *is* our friend, our true friend—is threatened with what to him would be a misfortune—the loss of his dog, the greatest treasure he has in the world—the chief source of

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his happiness. Comrades, five pounds would save him from this misfortune. Cannot we among us make up that sum, and present it to him? We are most of us indebted to him for many kindnesses, which we may now return. For my part, I cannot bear to lose the little dog. I have become accustomed to him, and his tricks amuse me. Gentlemen, I will set you the example.'

With these last words Gaspard placed his hat upon the ground, and threw into it a piece of money.

'I follow your lead,' said Mr. Germain, dropping a crown piece into the hat; 'for I cannot do without Fox, nor can my wife, either.'

'Nor I,' said the printers one after another, fumbling in their pockets and dropping a coin into Gaspard's hat.

'Oh, my poor Fox! How much everybody loves you!' said Cecil, in a voice tremulous with emotion. 'How good you are, my friends! How shall I ever thank you?'

Gaspard counted the money, and finding that it amounted to exactly five pounds, he wrapped it in a piece of paper, and, taking down his coat, asked Cecil Madame Marbœuf's address, and saying that he intended making the proposition to the lady himself, quitted the office.

Chapter XXIX

Fox's Letter

DURING Gaspard's absence everybody in the printing-office seemed unusually silent. Even Fox ceased to play, and Cecil, though he tried to attend to his ordinary duties, looked abstracted, and his eyes glanced over the pages without his comprehending a line. In about an hour Gaspard re-entered the office. He flung his hat upon the table, silently pulled off his coat, and hung it up, and,

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placing the money on the counter, threw himself into a chair, in evident ill-humour. Everybody was anxious to interrogate him, and yet they all remained silent. The intelligence of his ill-success had been communicated without words.

‘Her heart is made of stone!’ suddenly exclaimed Gaspard. ‘Cecil was right. She laughed in my face.’

‘I am quite as much obliged to you,’ said Cecil, pressing Gaspard’s hand, ‘as if you had succeeded in your errand. But I have a new idea, and you must tell me what you think of it.’

‘I suppose we are not to have any work to-day?’ said the principal proof-reader, interrupting Cecil.

‘Do not say that,’ answered Gaspard. ‘In one quarter of an hour we will all be at our posts again. Come, Cecil, what is your new project?’

‘It is this,’ replied Cecil. ‘It appears that Madame Marbœuf thinks more of dogs than of human beings, for our tears could not move her as much as the caresses of her dog. Suppose we let Fox plead for himself?’

‘I only see one objection to that,’ said Gaspard. ‘It is that Fox has never yet learned to speak.’

‘But Fox might send her a letter. All great personages have secretaries, you know; and Fox is a great personage since we have had so much trouble about him. Why can I not be his secretary?’

‘And I will be his letter-bearer,’ said Adrien.

‘That will never do,’ observed Mr. Germain. ‘The lady would order one of her domestics to follow you, and the abode of Fox would instantly be discovered. We will send the letter through the post-office.’

‘Right, right!’ cried all the printers. Fox was not even consulted. Cecil placed himself at a desk, and

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after writing several commencements of his letter, and tearing them up, he completed the following epistle :

‘ MY DEAR AND HONOURED MISTRESS,

‘ Two years ago I was lost in the Tuileries. I was driven about from corner to corner, and at last a sentinel pierced me several times with his bayonet. I was severely hurt, and should have died of my wounds, or of hunger—for everybody refused to protect me—until a child—a young boy who, like myself, was friendless and forsaken, and, like me, almost dying of hunger—took pity on me. He washed my wounds at the fountain in the Tuileries, and tore his only handkerchief in two to bind them up. He had only one penny in the world, with which he bought some bread and divided it with me. You see, Madame, these are things which cannot be forgotten. I am only a dog, but I have a heart, and I have not forgotten them.

‘ Since the time I have just spoken of, this child and I have always remained together. He would have refused any employment which forced him to part with me. I would not have sought shelter in a house where my benefactor was not welcome.

‘ You, Madame, I shall always see with pleasure. If you would permit it, I would come and visit you sometimes, but do not hope that I will ever forsake my master. I assure you I will never willingly do so. You have the right to take me by force, but I do not think that you can make me remain. Were you to tie me, I would break my chain. Were you to shut me up, I should jump out of the window, or whine so dolefully that you could not bear to hear me. And if I could not escape, I should pine away with grief, and finally die. You would then have gained nothing yourself, and you would have deprived

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an unhappy child of his best and dearest friend and companion.

‘ You will say that I am an ungrateful little brute. But I do not think I am so. Do I owe you more than I owe Cecil ? You are rich, and you bought me, perhaps, at a very extravagant price. Cecil did not buy me, but saved my life.

‘ My master begs that I will offer you the five pounds at which you valued me, and I promise you, on the word of a spaniel, to pay you my respects once every week and to make myself as agreeable and interesting as possible.

‘ I hope, Madame, that you will honour me with an answer, addressed to “ Fox the Spaniel, Paris.”

‘ Accept my assurances of profound respect and sincere attachment.

‘ As I am not very skilful in signing my name, you will find my mark at the bottom of this sheet.’

Cecil called Fox, and, lightly rubbing one of his front paws in the printing-ink, laid the paw upon that part of the letter to which the name of the writer should have been affixed. Fox remained perfectly quiet, and, when Cecil removed his paw, it had left a perfect impression of its size and form.

Cecil then read the letter to the printers, and it met their hearty approval. The letter was then folded, sealed, and addressed, and Adrien carried it to the post office.

Chapter XXX

The Post Office

Two mornings later the head clerk of the post office, who was sorting the letters, stopped at one, the address of which he read several times. First he read it without

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spectacles, then with his spectacles ; then he removed the spectacles from his eyes, rubbed the glasses, put them on again, and once more read the address of the letter. “ ‘To Fox the Spaniel, Paris,’ ” said he aloud. ‘What can that mean ? A letter to a dog ! I have been clerk of the post office thirty years, and I never heard of such a thing.’

At that moment a scratching upon the door made him turn his head. He opened the door, and a little black dog, with a folded piece of paper in his mouth, sprang into the room.

The clerk took the paper, and, opening it, found that it contained three halfpence. On examining the paper more particularly, he found these words traced upon it : ‘If there is a letter at the post office addressed to “Fox the Spaniel,” the clerk will have the goodness to take this money for the postage, and give the letter to the bearer.’

The man rubbed his eyes, as though he thought he was dreaming, and, glancing from the paper to the letter, and then at the dog, who stood as though waiting for an answer, he held the letter towards him. Fox seized the letter and made his escape. A moment afterwards a footman in green livery entered the office and said : ‘You have received a letter addressed to “Fox the Spaniel.” Has anybody called for it ?’

‘Yes, this very minute. The person to whom it was addressed has just carried it away with him. You must have met him on the steps.’

‘Was it a little boy ?’ asked the servant.

‘Not at all ! It was the spaniel himself—a little black dog. I dare say he is not yet out of sight.’

The servant opened the door, and saw at some distance a little boy who held an open letter in his hand, while a small black dog was gambolling beside him. Before the

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servant could follow them, they had turned the corner, and were out of sight.

The letter which Cecil held in his hand ran as follows :

‘ MY DEAR FOX,

‘ I have neither the time nor the talent which your secretary possesses, therefore I cannot write what I wish to say to you. Have the goodness to come and see me as soon as you receive this letter.

‘ Your former Mistress,

‘ ANTOINETTE MARBŒUF.’

Cecil read the letter to his friends at the printing-office, and then consulted with them concerning the course which he should pursue.

‘ I should go,’ said one.

‘ I should not go,’ cried another.

‘ Nor I,’ said a third.

‘ I do not agree with you,’ said Cecil. ‘ This lady has a right to the dog. I think I ought to hear what she has to say. I will go.’

Cecil ran off, and Fox, as usual, accompanied him. He was soon in front of Madame Marbœuf’s house. He was going to ring, when he observed that the door was open. He paused a moment without entering, and heard voices apparently engaged in an angry discussion.

‘ I tell you, leave my house, and never enter it again,’ said one voice, which Cecil recognized as that of Madame Marbœuf.

‘ But if I find him, if I bring him to you ?’ said the other voice, which Cecil thought sounded like that of his cousin.

‘ I will receive him,’ replied Madame Marbœuf ; ‘ but as for you, I never wish to see you again. Leave me, sir——’

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‘But, Madame, think,’ pleaded Augustus in a supplicating tone.

Madame Marboeuf interrupted him. ‘Leave me, sir ! I have nothing further to say to you.’

At that moment Cecil heard steps rapidly approaching, and, before he could retire, his cousin stood before him. Augustus stopped when he saw Cecil, and demanded in a low and trembling voice, ‘What do you want here ?’

‘I want to see Madame Marboeuf,’ replied Cecil calmly.

Augustus convulsively caught hold of Cecil’s arm, and, forcibly drawing him away, said : ‘Come with me—come with me ! She is a good-for-nothing woman—a monster !’

In his agitation he knocked against a tall fat gentleman who was ascending the steps. Cecil looked up, and exclaimed : ‘Ah, Mr. Raimond—kind Mr. Raimond ! Is it you ?’

‘What ! Cecil ! My little Robinson Crusoe, is it you ? Whom have you with you ?’

‘My cousin,’ replied Cecil.

‘And what are you doing here ?’ asked Mr. Raimond, addressing Augustus.

‘Let us go, let us go,’ said Augustus, leading Cecil away, without replying to Mr. Raimond. Augustus appeared pale, ill, and agitated ; and Cecil, who attributed his cousin’s haste to indisposition, had not the heart to oppose his wishes.

Chapter XXXI

The Summons

WHEN Cecil entered the printing-office again with his dog, the printers all asked him the news, and the child related all that had passed, and what he had heard while standing at the door of Madame Marboeuf’s house.

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‘You have a cousin, then, Cecil? You said you had no family,’ said Mr. Germain.

‘I only found him yesterday evening,’ replied Cecil; ‘but I did not speak to you of him because I do not like to talk of my cousin.’

‘He is not amiable, then, my little fellow?’

‘You know, Mr. Germain, a tree bears both good and bad fruits, but I have not said anything to make you suppose that my cousin bears any bad fruit.’

Mr. Germain smiled. ‘No, nor any good either, have you? Come! let us have no mystery. I thought that your cousin was rich, and that he did not notice you because you were poor.’

‘My cousin is poorer than I am,’ replied Cecil.

‘I should like to know,’ said one of the printers, ‘why Madame Marbœuf is a monster.’

‘Gentlemen, we have had enough of Madame Marbœuf. Let us now go to work,’ said Mr. Germain, striking his fist authoritatively on the table. ‘Cecil, I have some errands for you. Take these proof-sheets to the different persons whose names you will find on this list.’

Cecil had hardly left the office when a footman in green and gold livery entered.

‘Sir,’ said he, addressing one of the printers, ‘does not a boy named Cecil work here—a little boy who has a black spaniel called——’

‘Fox?’ interrupted the printer. ‘They have both gone home.’

‘I come with a message from Madame Marbœuf,’ said the footman.

‘And what does Madame Marbœuf wish?’ asked Mr. Germain, advancing towards the footman. ‘If you can leave the message, we will deliver it to Cecil.’

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‘She wishes him to come immediately to her house,’ replied the footman.

‘He has gone out now, and will not return to-day,’ said Mr. Germain. ‘But to-morrow we will tell him.’

‘Madame wished to see him to-day, but if that cannot be, to-morrow will answer,’ replied the footman, bowing and retiring.

Chapter XXXII

The Conclusion

By the time Cecil had finished his errands it was already dusk. He hastily returned home, and, to his great astonishment, perceived that his door was half open.

Cecil walked boldly into the cottage, and could hardly believe his senses when he recognized Madame Marbœuf seated on one of his two chairs and Mr. Raimond on the other. The blind man, his son, and Mary stood near, and beside them was the old soldier caressing Fox, and calling him Austerlitz! Behind this group, concealing himself as though in shame, stood Augustus, looking pale and haggard.

Madame Marbœuf appeared much moved, and Mr. Raimond was uneasily beating his cane on the ground. The blind man’s head was bent forward as though he was attentively listening to every sound, that he might divine what was going on around him. Mary and Paul were weeping, but their tears were of joy rather than grief.

Madame Marbœuf was the first to speak. ‘Come here, my child,’ said she, extending her hand to Cecil, ‘and tell me why, notwithstanding my note, you did not come to my house this morning.’

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Before Cecil had time to reply, Augustus stepped forward with a sad but resolute air, and said, in a voice full of emotion : ‘ It was *my* fault, Madame. I am very culpable. Ah, Cecil ! you were right in saying that our good and evil acts brought the one reward and the other punishment. Your history and mine prove that this is true. My first bad action was the burning of my father’s will, which insured you a comfortable income for life. By this means I deprived myself of the power to save my father’s fortune, the details of which were only given in his will. You know with what unnatural cruelty I took you to Paris and there forsook you. Since that time, Cecil, your image has haunted me.’

Here Augustus paused a moment, overcome by his feelings. Soon he continued :

‘ On returning to Bordeaux, I learned that my father’s only remaining sister, of whom he never spoke in our presence, because he had, many years ago, quarrelled with her husband, had arrived in the city. This sister had heard of her brother’s dangerous illness, and wished to see him again before he died. She was a widow, and rich ; these two circumstances were sufficient to make me call upon her. Her first inquiry was after her nephew Cecil. She said that as you were without fortune it was her intention to make you her heir. She asked to see you. I concealed my wickedness, and told her that your education had been so much neglected that I had taken you to Paris and placed you at college. My aunt praised me for this judicious action, and requested me to give her the address of the college. I gave her the first name that came into my head. She returned to Paris, and, as you may suppose, Cecil, I soon received a letter from her. She told me I had deceived her, and insisted upon knowing where you were. Not being able to reply, I did not answer

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her letter. As I told you, I was robbed, duped, and deceived. I lost the fortune I was unworthy of possessing, and came to Paris, where I completed my ruin. Madame Marbœuf is our aunt, Cecil—the sister of my father and of your mother.’

‘Yes, Cecil,’ said Madame Marbœuf, ‘I am your aunt, and in future my house and my fortune are yours. Come and embrace me, my dear child!’

Cecil, astonished, looked first at his aunt, who held out her arms to him, then at Mr. Raimond, who made a sign for him to go and embrace Madame Marbœuf, then at the weeping spectators of the scene; at Fox, who alternately licked the hand of Madame Marbœuf and of Cecil; and at Augustus, whose confusion was gradually disappearing.

Madame Marbœuf repeated: ‘Come and kiss me, my dear child!’

‘Did you know, Madame, that I was your nephew?’ said Cecil, complying with her invitation. As his head rested on her bosom, he felt her tears fall on his cheek.

‘No, she did not know it until to-day,’ said Mr. Raimond. ‘As I entered her house this morning I met you and this young man, who you told me was your cousin. I was going to question you, when your cousin drew you away. I made some inquiries of Madame Marbœuf, and she told me that she had not seen the child, but that the young man was her nephew, whom she disowned, because he had ill-treated a little cousin, who had suddenly disappeared. This disappearance, the title of cousin which you gave to the young man, the relation who had wronged you, and whose name you would never mention, awakened my suspicions. Before I had made up my mind what to do, your cousin himself entered. “Madame,” said he to Madame Marbœuf, “pardon me for daring to present

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myself before you again. I am a miserable wretch. I neither deserve mercy nor compassion, and when I tell you that the nephew whom you seek is the boy who brought your dog, you will, perhaps, make your servants kick me out of the house ; but I will not complain.” He then gave the address of the printing-office where you were employed. A servant was dispatched for you, but you had gone out for the whole day. We determined to give you an agreeable surprise at your own house. But Madame Marbœuf wished to see the blind man, whose history I had related to her. Next, we went to your friend, the old soldier, and desired him to accompany us ; and here we have been all awaiting the arrival of our host for at least two hours.’

‘ And if I have reason to rejoice, so have you, Augustus,’ said Cecil gaily. ‘ If I have recovered an aunt, you have found one likewise.’

‘ There you deceive yourself, Cecil,’ replied Madame Marbœuf. ‘ I will not acknowledge him as my nephew.’

‘ Oh, aunt !’ began Cecil supplicatingly.

‘ It is useless to talk to me,’ said his aunt. ‘ He knows it—I have not deceived him—and I told him that, whether he found you or not, my fortune was for ever lost to him.’

‘ No matter for your fortune—but your affection, aunt ?’ said Cecil. ‘ Your affection—*that* may be his ? After what I have heard, I understand that I can do what I please with my aunt’s fortune, so Augustus will share it with me ; but with her *affections* it is very different.’

‘ I never take back what I have once said,’ replied Madame Marbœuf. ‘ It is not just that the wicked should be recompensed as well as the good. All that I can promise is that I will not interfere with what Cecil chooses to do for his cousin. I will permit him to be as generous

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as he desires to be. He may give Augustus money if he chooses, but it must be in his own name.'

Cecil had hardly finished his thanks when he felt a dog's little teeth biting his hand. It was Fox, who appeared to reproach his master for having forgotten him.

'Oh, you are right, Fox—you are right!' said Cecil, bending down and embracing him. 'I am very ungrateful. You have been the means of my present happiness. Without you I should still be the poor little Robinson Crusoe, and you my man Friday.'

It only remains to be told that Cecil finished his studies at one of the first colleges in Paris, and instead of the little cottage on Mr. Raimond's ground stands a handsome house, in the building of which Paul and his comrades assisted.

The old soldier, to whom Cecil presented another Austerlitz, was placed as guard during its construction, and the place of doorkeeper is given to the blind man and his family. Cecil himself is the owner of the house.

As for Augustus, notwithstanding the care and attention of Cecil, whose kindness did not decrease, and notwithstanding his aunt's condescension in allowing him a seat at her table, he enlisted as a soldier not long since, and went to Africa.

Fox is yet alive, and has grown quite fat, which does not prevent his standing on his hind legs, and dancing, rather heavily, to be sure, when his young master cries out :

'Come, Fox ! my man Friday ! Come out and dance for your little Robinson of Paris !'

Maggie Tulliver Tries to Run Away from her Shadow



MAGGIE'S intentions, as usual, were on a larger scale than Tom had imagined. The resolution that gathered in her mind, after Tom and Lucy had walked away, was not so simple as that of going home. No ; she would run away, and go to the gipsies, and Tom should never see her any more.

That was by no means a new idea to Maggie ; she had been so often told she was like a gipsy, and 'half-wild,' that when she was miserable it seemed to her the only way of escaping opprobrium, and being entirely in harmony with circumstances would be to live in a little brown tent on the commons. The gipsies, she considered, would gladly receive her, and pay her much respect on account of her superior knowledge. She had once mentioned her views on this point to Tom, and suggested that he should stain his face brown, and they should run away together ; but Tom rejected the scheme with contempt, observing that gipsies were thieves, and hardly got anything to eat, and had nothing to drive but a donkey. To-day, however, Maggie thought her misery had reached a pitch at which gipsydom

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was her only refuge, and she rose from her seat on the roots of the tree with the sense that this was a great crisis in her life. She would run straight away till she came to Dunlow Common, where there would certainly be gipsies, and cruel Tom and the rest of her relations who found fault with her should never see her any more. She thought of her father as she ran along, but she reconciled herself to the idea of parting with him by determining that she would secretly send him a letter by a small gipsy, who would run away without telling where she was, and just let him know that she was well and happy, and always loved him very much.

Maggie soon got out of breath with running, but by the time Tom got to the pond again she was at the distance of three long fields, and was on the edge of the lane leading to the high-road. She stopped to pant a little, reflecting that running away was not a pleasant thing until one had got quite to the common where the gipsies were, but her resolution had not abated. She presently passed through the gate into the lane, not knowing where it would lead her, for it was not this way that they came from Dorlcote Mill to Garum Firs, and she felt all the safer for that, because there was no chance of her being overtaken. But she was soon aware, not without trembling, that there were two men coming along the lane in front of her. She had not thought of meeting strangers; she had been too much occupied with the idea of her friends coming after her. The formidable strangers were two shabby-looking men with flushed faces, one of them carrying a bundle on a stick over his shoulder; but to her surprise, while she was dreading their disapprobation as a runaway, the man with the bundle stopped, and in a half-whining, half-coaxing tone asked her if she had a copper to give a poor man. Maggie had a sixpence in her pocket—her

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Uncle Glegg's present—which she immediately drew out and gave this poor man with a polite smile, hoping he would feel very kindly towards her as a generous person. 'That's the only money I've got,' she said apologetically.

'Thank you, little miss,' said the man in a less respectful and grateful tone than Maggie anticipated, and she even observed that he smiled and winked at his companion. She walked on hurriedly, but was aware that the two men were standing still, probably to look after her, and she presently heard them laughing loudly. Suddenly it occurred to her that they might think she was an idiot. Tom had said that her cropped hair made her look like an idiot, and it was too painful an idea to be readily forgotten. Besides, she had no sleeves on ; only a cape and a bonnet. It was clear that she was not likely to make a favourable impression on passengers, and she thought she would turn into the fields again, but not on the same side of the lane as before, lest they should still be Uncle Pullet's fields.

She turned through the first gate that was not locked, and felt a delightful sense of privacy in creeping along by the hedgerows after her recent humiliating encounter. She was used to wandering about the fields by herself, and was less timid there than on the high-road. Sometimes she had to climb over high gates, but that was a small evil. She was getting out of reach very fast, and she should probably soon come within sight of Dunlow Common, or at least of some other common, for she had heard her father say that you couldn't go very far without coming to a common. She hoped so, for she was getting rather tired and hungry, and until she reached the gipsies there was no definite prospect of bread-and-butter.

It was still broad daylight, for Aunt Pullet, retaining the early habits of the Dodson family, took tea at half-

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past four by the sun, and at five by the kitchen clock ; so, though it was nearly an hour since Maggie started, there was no gathering gloom on the fields to remind her that the night would come. Still, it seemed to her that she had been walking a very great distance indeed, and it was really surprising that the common did not come within sight. Hitherto she had been in the rich parish of Garum, where there was a great deal of pasture-land, and she had only seen one labourer at a distance. That was fortunate in some respects, as labourers might be too ignorant to understand the propriety of her wanting to go to Dunlow Common ; yet it would have been better if she could have met someone who would tell her the way without wanting to know anything about her private business.

At last, however, the green fields came to an end, and Maggie found herself looking through the bars of a gate into a lane with a wide margin of grass on each side of it. She had never seen such a wide lane before, and, without her knowing why, it gave her the impression that the common could not be far off. Perhaps it was because she saw a donkey with a log to his foot feeding on the grassy margin, for she had seen a donkey with that pitiable encumbrance on Dunlow Common when she had been across it in her father's gig.

She crept through the bars of the gate, and walked on with new spirit, though not without haunting images of Apollyon, and a highwayman with a pistol, and a blinking dwarf in yellow, with a mouth from ear to ear, and other miscellaneous dangers. For poor little Maggie had at once the timidity of an active imagination and the daring that comes from overmastering impulse. She had rushed into the adventure of seeking her unknown kindred, the gipsies, and now she was in this strange lane she hardly dared look on one side of her, lest she should see the



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diabolical blacksmith in his leathern apron grinning at her with arms akimbo.

It was not without a leaping of the heart that she caught sight of a small pair of bare legs sticking up, feet uppermost, by the side of a hillock. They seemed something hideously preternatural, a diabolical kind of fungus ; for she was too much agitated at the first glance to see the ragged clothes and the dark, shaggy head attached to them. It was a boy asleep, and Maggie trotted along faster and more lightly, lest she should wake him. It did not occur to her that he was one of her friends, the gipsies, who in all probability would have very genial manners ; but the fact was so, for at the next bend in the lane Maggie actually saw the little semicircular black tent with the blue smoke rising before it which was to be her refuge from all the blighting obloquy that had pursued her in civilized life. She even saw a tall female figure by the column of smoke—doubtless the gipsy-mother, who provided the tea and other groceries. It was astonishing to herself that she did not feel more delighted. But it was startling to find the gipsies in a lane, after all, and not on a common ; indeed, it was rather disappointing, for a mysterious illimitable common, where there were sand-pits to hide in, and one was out of everybody's reach, had always made part of Maggie's picture of gipsy life.

She went on, however, and thought with some comfort that gipsies most likely knew nothing about idiots, so there was no danger of their falling into the mistake of setting her down at the first glance as an idiot. It was plain she had attracted attention, for the tall figure, who proved to be a young woman with a baby on her arm, walked slowly to meet her.

Maggie looked up in the new face rather tremblingly as it approached, and was reassured by the thought that her

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Aunt Pullet and the rest were right when they called her a gipsy, for this face, with the bright dark eyes and the long hair, was really something like what she used to see in the glass before she cut her hair off.

‘My little lady, where are you going to?’ the gipsy said, in a tone of coaxing deference. It was delightful, and just what Maggie expected. The gipsies saw at once that she was a little lady, and were prepared to treat her accordingly.

‘Not any farther,’ said Maggie, feeling as if she were saying what she had rehearsed in a dream. ‘I’m come to stay with *you*, please.’

‘That’s pretty ; come, then. Why, what a nice little lady you are, to be sure,’ said the gipsy, taking her by the hand. Maggie thought her very agreeable, but wished she had not been so dirty.

There was quite a group round the fire when they reached it. An old gipsy-woman was seated on the ground nursing her knees, and occasionally poking a skewer into the round kettle that sent forth an odorous steam ; two small shock-headed children were lying prone and resting on their elbows, something like small sphinxes ; and a placid donkey was bending his head over a tall girl, who, lying on her back, was scratching his nose and indulging him with a bite of excellent stolen hay. The slanting sunlight fell kindly upon them, and the scene was really very pretty and comfortable, Maggie thought, only she hoped they would soon set out the teacups. Everything would be quite charming when she had taught the gipsies to use a washing-basin, and to feel an interest in books.

It was a little confusing, though, that the young woman began to speak to the old one in a language which Maggie did not understand, while the tall girl who was feeding the

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donkey sat up and stared at her without offering any salutation. At last the old woman said :

‘ What, my pretty lady, are you come to stay with us ? Sit ye down and tell us where ye come from.’

It was just like a story. Maggie liked to be called pretty lady and treated in this way. She sat down and said : ‘ I’m come from home because I’m unhappy, and I mean to be a gipsy. I’ll live with you if you like, and I can teach you a great many things.’

‘ Such a clever little lady,’ said the woman with the baby, sitting down by Maggie, and allowing baby to crawl ; ‘ and such a pretty bonnet and frock,’ she added, taking off Maggie’s bonnet and looking at it, while she made an observation to the old woman in the unknown language.

The tall girl snatched the bonnet and put it on her own head hind-foremost with a grin, but Maggie was determined not to show any weakness on this subject, as if she were susceptible about her bonnet. ‘ I don’t want to wear a bonnet,’ she said ; ‘ I’d rather wear a red handkerchief, like yours ’—looking at her friend by her side. ‘ My hair was quite long till yesterday, when I cut it off ; but I dare say it will grow again very soon.’ she added apologetically, thinking it probable the gipsies had a strong prejudice in favour of long hair. And Maggie had forgotten even her hunger at that moment in the desire to conciliate gipsy opinion.

‘ Oh, what a nice little lady !—and rich, I’m sure,’ said the old woman. ‘ Didn’t you live in a beautiful house at home ?’

‘ Yes, my home is pretty, and I’m very fond of the river, where we go fishing ; but I’m often very unhappy. I should have liked to bring my books with me, but I came away in a hurry, you know. But I can tell you

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almost everything there is in my books—I've read them so many times—and that will amuse you. And I can tell you something about geography too—that's about the world we live in—very useful and interesting. Did you ever hear about Columbus?' Maggie's eyes had begun to sparkle and her cheeks to flush; she was really beginning to instruct the gipsies, and gaining great influence over them.

The gipsies themselves were not without amazement at this talk, though their attention was divided by the contents of Maggie's pocket, which the friend at her right hand had by this time emptied without attracting her notice.

'Why, she's hungry, poor little lady!' said the old woman, at the mention of Columbus.

'Oh no!' said Maggie, with some pity; 'Columbus was a very wonderful man, who found out half the world, and they put chains on him and treated him very badly, you know. It's in my "Catechism of Geography," but perhaps it's rather too long to tell before tea. . . . *I want my tea so*' The last words burst from Maggie, in spite of herself, with a sudden drop from patronizing instruction to simple peevishness.

'Why, she's hungry, poor little lady!' said the younger woman. 'Give her some o' the cold victual. You've been walking a good way, I'll be bound, my dear. Where's your home?'

'It's Dorlcote Mill, a good way off,' said Maggie. 'My father is Mr. Tulliver, but we mustn't let him know where I am, else he'll fetch me home again. Where does the queen of the gipsies live?'

'What! do you want to go to her, my little lady?' said the younger woman. The tall girl meanwhile was constantly staring at Maggie and grinning. Her manners were certainly not agreeable.

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'No,' said Maggie, 'I'm only thinking that, if she isn't a very good queen, you might be glad when she died, and you could choose another. If I was a queen, I'd be a very good queen, and kind to everybody.'

'Here's a bit o' nice victual, then,' said the old woman, handing to Maggie a lump of dry bread, which she had taken from a bag of scraps, and a piece of cold bacon.

'Thank you,' said Maggie, looking at the food without taking it; 'but will you give me some bread-and-butter and tea instead? I don't like bacon.'

'We've got no tea nor butter,' said the old woman, with something like a scowl, as if she were getting tired of coaxing.

'Oh, a little bread-and-treacle would do,' said Maggie.

'We han't got no treacle,' said the old woman crossly, whereupon there followed a sharp dialogue between the two women in their unknown tongue, and one of the two small sphinxes snatched at the bread-and-bacon and began to eat it.

At this moment the tall girl, who had gone a few yards off, came back and said something which produced a strong effect. The old woman, seeming to forget Maggie's hunger, poked the skewer into the pot with new vigour, and the younger crept under the tent and reached out some platters and spoons. Maggie trembled a little, and was afraid the tears would come into her eyes. Meanwhile, the tall girl gave a shrill cry, and presently came running up the boy whom Maggie had passed as he was sleeping—a rough urchin about the age of Tom. He stared at Maggie, and there ensued much incomprehensible chattering. She felt very lonely, and was quite sure she should begin to cry before long. The gipsies didn't seem to mind her at all, and she felt quite weak among them. But the springing tears were checked by new terror when

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two men came up, whose approach had been the cause of the sudden excitement. The elder of the two carried a bag, which he flung down, addressing the women in a loud and scolding tone, which they answered by a shower of treble sauciness ; while a black cur ran barking up to Maggie, and threw her into a tremor that only found a new cause in the curses with which the younger man called the dog off, and gave him a rap with a great stick he held in his hand.

Maggie felt that it was impossible she should ever be queen of these people, or even communicate to them amusing and useful knowledge.

Both the men now seemed to be inquiring about Maggie, for they looked at her, and the tone of the conversation became of that pacific kind which implies curiosity on one side and the power of satisfying it on the other. At last the younger woman said in her previous deferential coaxing tone : ‘ This nice little lady’s come to live with us. Aren’t you glad ? ’

‘ Ay, very glad,’ said the younger man, who was looking at Maggie’s silver thimble and other small matters that had been taken from her pocket. He returned them all except the thimble to the younger woman, with some observation, and she immediately restored them to Maggie’s pocket, while the men seated themselves, and began to attack the contents of the kettle—a stew of meat and potatoes—which had been taken off the fire and turned out into a yellow platter.

Maggie began to think that Tom must be right about the gipsies—they must certainly be thieves, unless the man meant to return her thimble by-and-by. She would willingly have given it to him, for she was not at all attached to her thimble ; but the idea that she was among thieves prevented her from feeling any comfort in the

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revival of deference and attention towards her. All thieves, except Robin Hood, were wicked people.

The women saw she was frightened. 'We've got nothing nice for a lady to eat,' said the old woman, in her coaxing tone ; 'and she's so hungry, sweet little lady !'

'Here, my dear, try if you can eat a bit o' this,' said the younger woman, handing some of the stew on a brown dish with an iron spoon to Maggie, who, remembering that the old woman had seemed angry with her for not liking the bread-and-bacon, dared not refuse the stew, though fear had chased away her appetite. If her father would but come by in the gig and take her up ! . Or even if Jack the Giantkiller, or Mr. Greatheart, or St. George, who slew the dragon on the halfpennies, would happen to pass that way ! But Maggie thought with a sinking heart that these heroes were never seen in the neighbourhood of St. Ogg's—nothing very wonderful ever came there.

Her ideas about the gipsies had undergone a rapid modification in the last five minutes. From having considered them very respectful companions, amenable to instruction, she had begun to think that they meant perhaps to kill her as soon as it was dark, and cut up her body for gradual cooking. The suspicion crossed her that the fierce-eyed old man was, in fact, the devil, who might drop that transparent disguise at any moment, and turn either into the grinning blacksmith or else a fiery-eyed monster with dragon's wings. It was no use trying to eat the stew, and yet the thing she most dreaded was to offend the gipsies by betraying her extremely unfavourable opinion of them, and she wondered with a keenness of interest that no theologian could have exceeded whether, if the devil were really present, he would know her thoughts.

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‘What! You don’t like the smell of it, my dear?’ said the young woman, observing that Maggie did not even take a spoonful of the stew. ‘Try a bit—come.’

‘No, thank you,’ said Maggie, summoning all her force for a desperate effort, and trying to smile in a friendly way. ‘I haven’t time, I think; it seems getting darker. I think I must go home now, and come again another day, and then I can bring you a basket with some jam-tarts and things.’

Maggie rose from her seat as she threw out this illusory prospect, devoutly hoping that Appollyon was gullible; but her hope sank when the old gipsy-woman said: ‘Stop a bit, stop a bit, little lady; we’ll take you home all safe when we’ve done supper. You shall ride home like a lady.’

Maggie sat down again, with little faith in this promise, though she presently saw the tall girl putting a bridle on the donkey, and throwing a couple of bags on his back.

‘Now then, little missis,’ said the younger man, rising, and leading the donkey forward, ‘tell us where you live. What’s the name o’ the place?’

‘Dorlcote Mill is my home,’ said Maggie eagerly. ‘My father is Mr. Tulliver; he lives there.’

‘What! a big mill a little way this side o’ St. Ogg’s?’

‘Yes,’ said Maggie. ‘Is it far off? I think I should like to walk there, if you please.’

‘No, no; it’ll be getting dark. We must make haste, and the donkey’ll carry you as nice as can be, you’ll see.’ He lifted Maggie as he spoke, and set her on the donkey. She felt relieved that it was not the old man who seemed to be going with her, but she had only a trembling hope that she was really going home.

‘Here’s your pretty bonnet,’ said the younger woman, putting that recently despised but now welcome article of costume on Maggie’s head; ‘and you’ll say we’ve been

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very good to you, won't you, and what a nice little lady we said you was ?'

'Oh yes, thank you,' said Maggie ; 'I'm very much obliged to you. But I wish you'd go with me, too.' She thought anything was better than going with one of the dreadful men alone ; it would be more cheerful to be murdered by a larger party.

'Ah, you're fondest o' *me*, aren't you ?' said the woman. 'But I can't go ; you'll go too fast for me.'

It now appeared that the man also was to be seated on the donkey, holding Maggie before him, and she was as incapable of remonstrating against this arrangement as the donkey himself, though no nightmare had ever seemed to her more horrible.

When the woman had patted her on the back, and said 'Good-bye,' the donkey, at a strong hint from the man's stick, set off at a rapid walk along the lane towards the point Maggie had come from an hour ago, while the tall girl and the rough urchin, also furnished with sticks, obligingly escorted them for the first hundred yards, with much screaming and thwacking.

Not Leonore, in that preternatural midnight excursion with her phantom lover, was more terrified than poor Maggie in this entirely natural ride on a short-paced donkey, with a gipsy behind her, who considered that he was earning half a crown. The red light of the setting sun seemed to have a portentous meaning, with which the alarming bray of the second donkey with the log on its foot must surely have some connection. Two low, thatched cottages—the only houses they passed in this lane—seemed to add to its dreariness. They had no windows to speak of, and the doors were closed. It was probable that they were inhabited by witches, and it was a relief to find that the donkey did not stop there.

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At last—oh, sight of joy!—this lane, the longest in the world, was coming to an end, was opening on a broad high-road, where there was actually a coach passing. And there was a finger-post at the corner. She had surely seen that finger-post before. ‘To St. Ogg’s, 2 miles.’ The gipsy really meant to take her home, then. He was probably a good man, after all, and might have been rather hurt at the thought that she didn’t like coming with him alone. This idea became stronger as she felt more and more certain that she knew the road quite well, and she was considering how she might open a conversation with the injured gipsy, and not only gratify his feelings, but efface the impression of her cowardice, when, as they reached a cross-road, Maggie caught sight of someone coming on a white-faced horse.

‘Oh, stop, stop!’ she cried out. ‘There’s my father! Oh, father, father!’ The sudden joy was almost painful, and before her father reached her she was sobbing.

Great was Mr. Tulliver’s wonder, for he had made a round from Basset, and had not yet been home. ‘Why, what’s the meaning o’ this?’ he said, checking his horse, while Maggie slipped from the donkey and ran to her father’s stirrup.

‘The little miss lost herself, I reckon,’ said the gipsy. ‘She’d come to our tent at the far end o’ Dudlow Lane, and I was bringing her where she said her home was. It’s a good way to come arter being on the tramp all day.’

‘Oh yes, father; he’s been very good to bring me home,’ said Maggie—‘a very kind, good man!’

‘Here, then, my man,’ said Mr. Tulliver, taking out five shillings; ‘it’s the best day’s work *you* ever did. I couldn’t afford to lose the little wench. Here, lift her up before me.’

‘Why, Maggie, how’s this, how’s this?’ he said, as

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they rode along, while she laid her head against her father and sobbed. 'How came you to be rambling about and lose yourself?'

'Oh, father,' sobbed Maggie, 'I ran away because I was so unhappy. Tom was so angry with me, I couldn't bear it.'

'Pooh, pooh!' said Mr. Tulliver soothingly, 'you mustn't think o' running away from father. What 'ud father do without his little wench?'

'Oh no, I never will again, father—never.'

Mr. Tulliver spoke his mind very strongly when he reached home that evening, and the effect was seen in the remarkable fact that Maggie never heard one reproach from her mother or one taunt from Tom about this foolish business of her running away to the gipsies. Maggie was rather awe-stricken by this unusual treatment, and sometimes thought that her conduct had been too wicked to be alluded to.

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HAD resolved to run away. To go, by some means or other, down into the country, to the only relation I had in the world, and tell my story to my aunt, Miss Betsey.

I have already observed that I don't know how this desperate idea came into my brain. But, once there, it remained there ; and hardened into a purpose than which I have never entertained a more determined purpose in my life. I am far from sure that I believed there was anything hopeful in it, but my mind was thoroughly made up that it must be carried into execution.

Again and again, and a hundred times again, since the night when the thought had first occurred to me and banished sleep, I had gone over that old story of my poor mother's about my birth, which it had been one of my great delights in the old time to hear her tell, and which I knew by heart. My aunt walked into that story, and walked out of it, a dread and awful personage ; but there was one little trait in her behaviour which I liked to dwell on, and which gave me some faint shadow of encouragement. I could not forget how my mother had thought

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that she felt her touch her pretty hair with no ungentle hand ; and, though it might have been altogether my mother's fancy, and might have had no foundation whatever in fact, I made a little picture out of it, of my terrible aunt relenting towards the girlish beauty that I recollected so well and loved so much, which softened the whole narrative. It is very possible that it had been in my mind a long time, and had gradually engendered my determination.

My box was at my old lodging, over the water, and I had written a direction for it on the back of one of our address cards that we nailed on the casks : 'Master David, to be left till called for, at the Coach Office, Dover.' This I had in my pocket ready to put on the box, after I should have got it out of the house ; and as I went towards my lodging, I looked about me for someone who would help me to carry it to the booking-office.

There was a long-legged young man with a very little empty donkey-cart, standing near the Obelisk, in the Blackfriars Road, whose eye I caught as I was going by, and who, addressing me as 'Sixpenn'orth o' bad ha'pence,' hoped 'I should know him agin to swear to'—in allusion, I have no doubt, to my staring at him. I stopped to assure him that I had not done so in bad manners, but uncertain whether he might or might not like a job.

'Wot job?' said the long-legged young man.

'To move a box,' I answered.

'Wot box?' said the long-legged young man.

I told him mine, which was down that street there, and which I wanted him to take to the Dover Coach Office for sixpence.

'Done with you for a tanner!' said the long-legged young man, and directly got upon his cart, which was

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nothing but a large wooden tray on wheels, and rattled away at such a rate that it was as much as I could do to keep pace with the donkey.

There was a defiant manner about this young man, and particularly about the way in which he chewed straw as he spoke to me, that I did not much like ; as the bargain was made, however, I took him upstairs to the room I was leaving, and we brought the box down, and put it on his cart. Now, I was unwilling to put the direction-card on there, lest any of my landlord's family should fathom what I was doing, and detain me ; so I said to the young man that I would be glad if he would stop for a minute, when he came to the dead-wall of the King's Bench prison. The words were no sooner out of my mouth than he rattled away, as if he, my box, the cart, and the donkey, were all equally mad ; and I was quite out of breath with running and calling after him, when I caught him at the place appointed.

Being much flushed and excited, I tumbled my half-guinea out of my pocket in pulling the card out. I put it in my mouth for safety, and though my hands trembled a good deal, had just tied the card on very much to my satisfaction, when I felt myself violently chucked under the chin by the long-legged young man, and saw my half-guinea fly out of my mouth into his hand.

‘ Wot ! ’ said the young man, seizing me by my jacket collar, with a frightful grin. ‘ This is a pollis case, is it ? You're a-going to bolt, are you ? Come to the pollis, you young warmin ; come to the pollis ! ’

‘ Give me my money back, if you please, ’ said I, very much frightened, ‘ and leave me alone. ’

‘ Come to the pollis ! ’ said the young man. ‘ You shall prove it youn to the pollis ! ’

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‘Give me my box and my money, will you,’ I cried, bursting into tears.

The young man still replied, ‘Come to the pollis !’ and was driving me against the donkey in a violent manner, as if there were any affinity between that animal and a magistrate ; when he changed his mind, jumped into the cart, sat upon my box, and, exclaiming that he would drive to the pollis straight, rattled away harder than ever.

I ran after him as fast as I could, but I had no breath to call out with, and should not have dared to call out now if I had. I narrowly escaped being run over, twenty times at least, in half a mile. Now I lost him, now I saw him, now I lost him, now I was cut at with a whip, now shouted at, now down in the mud, now up again, now running into somebody’s arms, now running headlong at a post. At length, confused by fright and heat, and doubting whether half London might not by this time be turning out for my apprehension, I left the young man to go where he would with my box and money ; and, panting and crying, but never stopping, faced about for Greenwich, which I had understood was on the Dover Road ; taking very little more out of the world, towards the retreat of my aunt, Miss Betsey, than I had brought into it, on the night when my arrival gave her so much umbrage.

For anything I know, I may have had some wild idea of running all the way to Dover, when I gave up the pursuit of the young man with the donkey-cart, and started for Greenwich. My scattered senses were soon collected as to that point, if I had ; for I came to a stop in the Kent Road, at a terrace with a piece of water before it, and a great foolish image in the middle, blowing a dry shell. Here I sat down on a doorstep, quite spent and exhausted with the efforts I had already made, and with

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hardly breath enough to cry for the loss of my box and half-guinea.

It was by this time dark ; I heard the clocks strike ten as I sat resting. But it was a summer night, fortunately, and fine weather. When I had recovered my breath, and had got rid of a stifling sensation in my throat, I rose up and went on. In the midst of my distress, I had no notion of going back. I doubt if I should have had any, though there had been a Swiss snowdrift in the Kent Road.

But my standing, possessed of only three-halfpence in the world (and I am sure I wonder how *they* came to be left in my pocket on a Saturday night !), troubled me none the less because I went on. I began to picture to myself, as a scrap of newspaper intelligence, my being found dead in a day or two, under some hedge ; and I trudged on miserably, though as fast as I could, until I happened to pass a little shop, where it was written up that ladies' and gentlemen's wardrobes were bought, and that the best price was given for rags, bones, and kitchen-stuff. The master of this shop was sitting at the door in his shirt-sleeves, smoking ; and as there were a great many coats and pairs of trousers dangling from the low ceiling, and only two feeble candles burning inside to show what they were, I fancied that he looked like a man of a revengeful disposition, who had hung all his enemies, and was enjoying himself.

I went up the next by-street, took off my waistcoat, rolled it neatly under my arm, and came back to the shop-door. ' If you please, sir,' I said, ' I am to sell this for a fair price.'

Mr. Dolloby—Dolloby was the name over the shop-door, at least—took the waistcoat, stood his pipe on its head against the doorpost, went into the shop, followed by me, snuffed the two candles with his fingers, spread the

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waistcoat on the counter, and looked at it there, held it up against the light, and looked at it there, and ultimately said—

‘What do you call a price, now, for this here little weskit?’

‘Oh! you know best, sir,’ I returned modestly.

‘I can’t be buyer and seller too,’ said Mr. Dolloby.

‘Put a price on this here little weskit.’

‘Would eighteenpence be——’ I hinted, after some hesitation.

Mr. Dolloby rolled it up again, and gave it me back.

‘I should rob my family,’ he said, ‘if I was to offer ninepence for it.’

This was a disagreeable way of putting the business; because it imposed upon me, a perfect stranger, the unpleasantness of asking Mr. Dolloby to rob his family on my account. My circumstances being so very pressing, however, I said I would take ninepence for it, if he pleased. Mr. Dolloby, not without some grumbling, gave ninepence. I wished him good-night, and walked out of the shop, the richer by that sum, and the poorer by a waistcoat. But when I buttoned my jacket, that was not much.

Indeed, I foresaw pretty clearly that my jacket would go next, and that I should have to make the best of my way to Dover in a shirt and a pair of trousers, and might deem myself lucky if I got there even in that trim. But my mind did not run so much on this as might be supposed. Beyond a general impression of the distance before me, and of the young man with the donkey-cart having used me cruelly, I think I had no very urgent sense of my difficulties when I once again set off with my ninepence in my pocket.

A plan had occurred to me for passing the night, which I was going to carry into execution. This was, to lie

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behind the wall at the back of my old school, in a corner where there used to be a haystack. I imagined it would be a kind of company to have the boys, and the bedroom where I used to tell the stories, so near me : although the boys would know nothing of my being there, and the bedroom would yield me no shelter.

I had had a hard day's work, and was pretty well jaded when I came climbing out, at last, upon the level of Blackheath. It cost me some trouble to find out Salem House ; but I found it, and I found a haystack in the corner, and I lay down by it ; having first walked round the wall, and looked up at the windows, and seen that all was dark and silent within. Never shall I forget the lonely sensation of first lying down, without a roof above my head !

Sleep came upon me as it came on many other outcasts, against whom house-doors were locked, and house-dogs barked, that night—and I dreamed of lying on my old school-bed, talking to the boys in my room ; and found myself sitting upright, looking wildly at the stars that were glistening and glimmering above me. When I remembered where I was at that untimely hour, a feeling stole upon me that made me get up, afraid of I don't know what, and walk about. But the fainter glimmering of the stars, and the pale light in the sky where the day was coming, reassured me : and my eyes being very heavy, I lay down again, and slept—though with a knowledge in my sleep that it was cold—until the warm beams of the sun, and the ringing of the getting-up bell at Salem House, awoke me. So I crept away from the wall as Mr. Creakle's boys were getting up, and struck into the long dusty track which I had first known to be the Dover Road when I was one of them, and when I little expected that any eyes would ever see me, the wayfarer I was now, upon it.

What a different Sunday morning from the old Sunday

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morning at Yarmouth ! In due time I heard the church-bells ringing, as I plodded on ; and I met people who were going to church ; and I passed a church or two where the congregation were inside, and the sound of singing came out into the sunshine, while the beadle sat and cooled himself in the shade of the porch, or stood beneath the yew-tree, with his hand to his forehead, glowering at me going by. But the peace and rest of the old Sunday morning were on everything, except me. That was the difference. I felt quite wicked in my dirt and dust, and with my tangled hair. But for the quiet picture I had conjured up of my mother, in her youth and beauty, weeping by the fire, and my aunt relenting to her, I hardly think I should have had courage to go on until next day. But it always went before me, and I followed.

I got, that Sunday, through three-and-twenty miles on the straight road, though not very easily, for I was new to that kind of toil. I see myself, as evening closes in, coming over the bridge at Rochester, footsore and tired, and eating bread that I had bought for supper. One or two little houses, with the notice, ‘ Lodgings for Travelers,’ hanging out, had tempted me ; but I was afraid of spending the few pence I had, and was even more afraid of the vicious looks of the trampers I had met or overtaken. I sought no shelter, therefore, but the sky ; and toiling into Chatham—which, in that night’s aspect, is a mere dream of chalk, and drawbridges, and mastless ships in a muddy river, roofed like Noah’s arks—crept, at last, upon a sort of grass-grown battery overhanging a lane, where a sentry was walking to and fro. Here I lay down, near a cannon ; and, happy in the society of the sentry’s footsteps, though he knew no more of my being above him than the boys at Salem House had known of my lying by the wall, slept soundly until morning.

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Very stiff and sore of foot I was in the morning, and quite dazed by the beating of drums and marching of troops, which seemed to hem me in on every side when I went down towards the long, narrow street. Feeling that I could go but a very little way that day, if I were to reserve any strength for getting to my journey's end, I resolved to make the sale of my jacket its principal business. Accordingly, I took the jacket off, that I might learn to do without it ; and carrying it under my arm, began a tour of inspection of the various slop-shops.

It was a likely place to sell a jacket in ; for the dealers in second-hand clothes were numerous, and were, generally speaking, on the look-out for customers at their shop-doors. But as most of them had, hanging up among their stock, an officer's coat or two, epaulettes and all, I was rendered timid by the costly nature of their dealings, and walked about for a long time without offering my merchandise to anyone.

This modesty of mine directed my attention to the marine-store shops, and such shops as Mr. Dolloby's, in preference to the regular dealers. At last I found one that I thought looked promising, at the corner of a dirty lane, ending in an inclosure full of stinging-nettles, against the palings of which some second-hand sailors' clothes, that seemed to have overflowed the shop, were fluttering among some cots, and rusty guns, and oilskin hats, and certain trays full of so many old rusty keys of so many sizes that they seemed various enough to open all the doors in the world.

Into this shop, which was low and small, and which was darkened rather than lighted by a little window overhung with clothes, and was descended into by some steps, I went with a palpitating heart ; which was not relieved when an ugly old man, with the lower part of his



Seized me by the hair
of my head

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face all covered with a stubbly, grey beard, rushed out of a dirty den behind it, and seized me by the hair of my head. He was a dreadful old man to look at, in a filthy flannel waistcoat, and smelling terribly of rum. His bedstead, covered with a tumbled and ragged piece of patchwork, was in the den he had come from, where another little window showed a prospect of more stinging-nettles and a lame donkey.

‘Oh, what do you want?’ grinned this old man, in a fierce, monotonous whine. ‘Oh, my eyes and limbs, what do you want? Oh, my lungs and liver, what do you want? Oh, goroo, goroo!’

I was so much dismayed by these words, and particularly by the repetition of the last unknown one, which was a kind of rattle in his throat, that I could make no answer; hereupon the old man, still holding me by the hair, repeated—

‘Oh, what do you want? Oh, my eyes and limbs, what do you want? Oh, my lungs and liver, what do you want? Oh, goroo!’ which he screwed out of himself, with an energy that made his eyes start in his head.

‘I wanted to know,’ I said, trembling, ‘if you would buy a jacket.’

‘Oh, let’s see the jacket!’ cried the old man. ‘Oh, my heart on fire, show the jacket to us! Oh, my eyes and limbs, bring the jacket out!’

With that he took his trembling hands, which were like the claws of a great bird, out of my hair, and put on a pair of spectacles, not at all ornamental to his inflamed eyes.

‘Oh, how much for the jacket?’ cried the old man, after examining it. ‘Oh—goroo!—how much for the jacket?’

‘Half a crown,’ I answered, recovering myself.

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‘Oh, my lungs and liver!’ cried the old man, ‘no! Oh, my eyes, no! Oh, my limbs, no! Eighteenpence. Goroo!’

Every time he uttered this ejaculation, his eyes seemed to be in danger of starting out; and every sentence he spoke, he delivered in a sort of tune, always exactly the same, and more like a gust of wind, which begins low, mounts up high, and falls again, than any other comparison I can find for it.

‘Well,’ said I, glad to have closed the bargain, ‘I’ll take eighteenpence.’

‘Oh, my liver!’ cried the old man, throwing the jacket on a shelf. ‘Get out of the shop! Oh, my lungs, get out of the shop! Oh, my eyes and limbs—goroo!—don’t ask for money; make it an exchange.’

I never was so frightened in my life, before or since; but I told him humbly that I wanted money, and that nothing else was of any use to me, but that I would wait for it, as he desired, outside, and had no wish to hurry him. So I went outside, and sat down in the shade in a corner. And I sat there so many hours, that the shade became sunlight, and the sunlight became shade again, and still I sat there waiting for the money.

There never was such another drunken madman in that line of business, I hope. That he was well known in the neighbourhood, and enjoyed the reputation of having sold himself to the devil, I soon understood from the visits he received from the boys, who continually came skirmishing about the shop, shouting that legend, and calling to him to bring out his gold. ‘You ain’t poor, you know, Charley, as you pretend. Bring out your gold. Bring out some of the gold you sold yourself to the devil for. Come! It’s in the lining of the mattress, Charley. Rip it open, and let’s have some!’ This, and many offers

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to lend him a knife for the purpose, exasperated him to such a degree that the whole day was a succession of rushes on his part, and flights on the part of the boys. Sometimes, in his rage, he would take me for one of them, and come at me, mouthing as if he were going to tear me in pieces ; then, remembering me, just in time, would dive into the shop, and lie upon his bed, as I thought from the sound of his voice, yelling in a frantic way, to his own windy tune, the ‘ Death of Nelson ’; with an Oh ! before every line, and innumerable Goroos ! interspersed. As if this were not bad enough for me, the boys, connecting me with this establishment, on account of the patience and perseverance with which I sat outside, half-dressed, pelted me, and used me very ill all day.

He made many attempts to induce me to consent to an exchange ; at one time coming out with a fishing-rod, at another with a fiddle, at another with a cocked hat, at another with a flute. But I resisted all these overtures, and sat there in desperation ; each time asking him, with tears in my eyes, for my money or my jacket. At last he began to pay me in halfpence at a time ; and was full two hours getting by easy stages to a shilling.

‘ Oh, my eyes and limbs ! ’ he then cried, peeping hideously out of the shop, after a long pause, ‘ will you go for twopence more ? ’

‘ I can’t,’ I said ; ‘ I shall be starved.’

‘ Oh, my lungs and liver, will you go for threepence ? ’

‘ I would go for nothing, if I could,’ I said, ‘ but I want the money badly.’

‘ Oh, go—roo ! ’ (it is really impossible to express how he twisted this ejaculation out of himself as he peeped round the doorpost at me, showing nothing but his crafty old head) ‘ will you go for fourpence ? ’

I was so faint and weary that I closed with this offer ;

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and taking the money out of his claw, not without trembling, went away more hungry and thirsty than I had ever been, a little before sunset. But at an expense of threepence I soon refreshed myself completely ; and, being in better spirits then, limped seven miles upon my road.

My bed at night was under another haystack, where I rested comfortably, after having washed my blistered feet in a stream, and dressed them as well as I was able, with some cool leaves. When I took the road again next morning, I found that it lay through a succession of hop-grounds and orchards. It was sufficiently late in the year for the orchards to be ruddy with ripe apples ; and in a few places the hop-pickers were already at work. I thought it all extremely beautiful, and made up my mind to sleep among the hops that night : imagining some cheerful companionship in the long perspective of poles, with the graceful leaves twining round them.

The trampers were worse than ever that day, and inspired me with a dread that is yet fresh in my mind. Some of them were most ferocious-looking ruffians, who stared at me as I went by ; and stopped, perhaps, and called after me to come back and speak to them ; and when I took to my heels, stoned me. I recollect one young fellow—a tinker, I suppose, from his wallet and brazier—who had a woman with him, and who faced about and stared at me thus, and then roared to me in such a tremendous voice to come back, that I halted and looked round.

‘Come here, when you’re called,’ said the tinker, ‘or I’ll rip your young body open.’

I thought it best to go back. As I drew nearer to them, trying to propitiate the tinker by my looks, I observed that the woman had a black eye.

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‘Where are you going?’ said the tinker, griping the bosom of my shirt with his blackened hand.

‘I am going to Dover,’ I said.

‘Where do you come from?’ asked the tinker, giving his hand another turn in my shirt, to hold me more securely.

‘I come from London,’ I said.

‘What lay are you upon?’ asked the tinker. ‘Are you a prig?’

‘N—no,’ I said.

‘Ain’t you? If you make a brag of your honesty to me,’ said the tinker, ‘I’ll knock your brains out.’

With his disengaged hand he made a menace of striking me, and then looked at me from head to foot.

‘Have you got the price of a pint of beer about you?’ said the tinker. ‘If you have, out with it, afore I take it away!’

I should certainly have produced it, but that I met the woman’s look, and saw her very slightly shake her head, and form ‘No!’ with her lips.

‘I am very poor,’ I said, attempting to smile, ‘and have got no money.’

‘Why, what do you mean?’ said the tinker, looking so sternly at me, that I almost feared he saw the money in my pocket.

‘Sir!’ I stammered.

‘What do you mean?’ said the tinker, ‘by wearing my brother’s silk handkercher? Give it over here!’ And he had mine off my neck in a moment, and tossed it to the woman.

The woman burst into a fit of laughter, as if she thought this a joke, and tossing it back to me, nodded once, as slightly as before, and made the word ‘Go!’ with her lips. Before I could obey, however, the tinker seized the hand-

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kerchief out of my hand with a roughness that threw me away like a feather, and putting it loosely round his own neck, turned upon the woman with an oath, and knocked her down. I never shall forget seeing her fall backward on the hard road, and lie there with her bonnet tumbled off, and her hair all whitened in the dust ; nor, when I looked back from a distance, seeing her sitting on the pathway, which was a bank by the roadside, wiping the blood from her face with a corner of her shawl, while he went on ahead.

This adventure frightened me so, that, afterwards, when I saw any of these people coming, I turned back until I could find a hiding-place, where I remained until they had gone out of sight ; which happened so often, that I was very seriously delayed. But under this difficulty, as under all the other difficulties of my journey, I seemed to be sustained and led on by my fanciful picture of my mother in her youth, before I came into the world. It always kept me company. It was there, among the hops, when I lay down to sleep ; it was with me on my waking in the morning ; it went before me all day. I have associated it, ever since, with the sunny street of Canterbury, dozing as it were in the hot light ; and with the sight of its old houses and gateways, and the stately grey Cathedral, with the rooks sailing round the towers. When I came, at last, upon the bare, wide down near Dover, it relieved the solitary aspect of the scene with hope ; and not until I reached that first great aim of my journey, and actually set foot in the town itself, on the sixth day of my flight, did it desert me. But then, strange to say, when I stood with my ragged shoes, and my dusty, sunburnt, half-clothed figure, in the place so long desired, it seemed to vanish like a dream, and to leave me helpless and dispirited.

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I inquired about my aunt among the boatmen first, and received various answers. One said she lived in the South Foreland Light, and had singed her whiskers by doing so ; another, that she was made fast to the great buoy outside the harbour, and could only be visited at half-tide ; a third, that she was locked up in Maidstone Jail for child-stealing ; a fourth, that she was seen to mount a broom in the last high wind, and make direct for Calais. The fly-drivers, among whom I inquired next, were equally jocose and equally disrespectful ; and the shopkeepers, not liking my appearance, generally replied, without hearing what I had to say, that they had got nothing for me. I felt more miserable and destitute than I had done at any period of my running away. My money was all gone, I had nothing left to dispose of ; I was hungry, thirsty, and worn out ; and seemed as distant from my end as if I had remained in London.

The morning had worn away in these inquiries, and I was sitting on the step of an empty shop at a street corner, near the market-place, deliberating upon wandering towards those other places which had been mentioned, when a fly-driver, coming by with his carriage, dropped a horse-cloth. Something good-natured in the man's face, as I handed it up, encouraged me to ask him if he could tell me where Miss Trotwood lived ; though I had asked the question so often, that it almost died upon my lips.

'Trotwood,' said he. 'Let me see. I know the name, too. Old lady ?'

'Yes,' I said, 'rather.'

'Pretty stiff in the back,' said he, making himself upright.

'Yes,' I said. 'I should think it very likely.'

'Carries a bag ?' said he—'bag with a good deal of

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room in it—is gruffish, and comes down upon you, sharp?’

My heart sank within me as I acknowledged the undoubted accuracy of this description.

‘Why, then, I tell you what,’ said he. ‘If you go up there,’ pointing with his whip towards the heights, ‘and keep right on till you come to some houses facing the sea, I think you’ll hear of her. My opinion is she won’t stand anything, so here’s a penny for you.’

I accepted the gift thankfully, and bought a loaf with it. Despatching this refreshment by the way, I went in the direction my friend had indicated, and walked on a good distance without coming to the houses he had mentioned. At length I saw some before me; and approaching them, went into a little shop (it was what we used to call a general shop, at home), and inquired if they could have the goodness to tell me where Miss Trotwood lived. I addressed myself to a man behind the counter, who was weighing some rice for a young woman; but the latter, taking the inquiry to herself, turned round quickly.

‘My mistress?’ she said. ‘What do you want with her, boy?’

‘I want,’ I replied, ‘to speak to her, if you please.’

‘To beg of her, you mean,’ retorted the damsel.

‘No,’ I said, ‘indeed.’ But suddenly remembering that in truth I came for no other purpose, I held my peace in confusion, and felt my face burn.

My aunt’s handmaid, as I suppose she was from what she had said, put her rice in a little basket and walked out of the shop; telling me that I could follow her, if I wanted to know where Miss Trotwood lived. I needed no second permission; though I was by this time in such a state of consternation and agitation, that my legs shook under me. I followed the young woman, and we soon came to a very

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neat little cottage with cheerful bay-windows : in front of it, a small, square, gravelled court or garden full of flowers, carefully tended, and smelling deliciously.

‘This is Miss Trotwood’s,’ said the young woman. ‘Now you know ; and that’s all I have got to say.’ With which words she hurried into the house, as if to shake off the responsibility of my appearance ; and left me standing at the garden-gate, looking disconsolately over the top of it towards the parlour-window, where a muslin curtain, partly undrawn in the middle, a large, round, green screen or fan fastened on to the window-sill, a small table, and a great chair, suggested to me that my aunt might be at that moment seated in awful state.

My shoes were by this time in a woeful condition. The soles had shed themselves bit by bit, and the upper leathers had broken and burst until the very shape and form of shoes had departed from them. My hat (which had served me for a nightcap, too) was so crushed and bent, that no old battered handleless saucepan on a dung-hill need have been ashamed to vie with it. My shirt and trousers, stained with heat, dew, grass, and the Kentish soil on which I had slept—and torn besides—might have frightened the birds from my aunt’s garden, as I stood at the gate. My hair had known no comb or brush since I left London. My face, neck, and hands, from unaccustomed exposure to the air and sun, were burnt to a berry-brown. From head to foot I was powdered almost as white with chalk and dust, as if I had come out of a lime-kiln. In this plight, and with a strong consciousness of it, I waited to introduce myself to, and make my first impression on, my formidable aunt.

The unbroken stillness of the parlour-window leading me to infer, after awhile, that she was not there, I lifted up my eyes to the window above it, where I saw a florid,

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pleasant-looking gentleman, with a grey head, who shut up one eye in a grotesque manner, nodded his head at me several times, shook it at me as often, laughed, and went away.

I had been discomposed enough before ; but I was so much the more discomposed by this unexpected behaviour, that I was on the point of slinking off, to think how I'd best proceed, when there came out of the house a lady with a handkerchief tied over her cap, and a pair of gardening gloves on her hands, wearing a gardening pocket like a toll-man's apron, and carrying a great knife. I knew her immediately to be Miss Betsey, for she came stalking out of the house exactly as my poor mother had so often described her stalking up our garden at Blunderstone Rookery.

'Go away !' said Miss Betsey, shaking her head, and making a distant chop in the air with her knife. 'Go along ! No boys here !'

I watched her with my heart at my lips, as she marched to a corner of her garden, and stooped to dig up some little root there. Then, without a scrap of courage, but with a great deal of desperation, I went softly in and stood beside her, touching her with my finger.

'If you please, ma'am,' I began.

She started, and looked up.

'If you please, aunt.'

'Eh ?' exclaimed Miss Betsey, in a tone of amazement I have never heard approached.

'If you please, aunt, I am your nephew.'

'Oh !' said my aunt, and sat flat down in the garden-path.

Charlie and Fred Become Great Adventurers at Last



I

MEANWHILE we saved up our pocket-money and put it in a canvas bag, as being sailor-like. Most of the money was Fred's, but he was very generous about this, and said I was to take care of it, as I was more managing than he. And we practised tree-

climbing to be ready for the masts, and ate earth-nuts to learn to live upon roots, in case we were thrown upon a desert island. Of course, we did not give up our proper meals, as we were not obliged to yet, and I sometimes felt rather doubtful about how we should feel living upon nothing but roots for breakfast, dinner, and tea. However, I had observed that whenever the captain was wrecked a barrel of biscuits went ashore soon afterwards, and I hoped it might always be so in wrecks, for biscuits go a long way, especially sailors' biscuits, which are large.

I made a kind of handbook for adventure-seekers, too, in an old exercise book, showing what might be expected and should be prepared for in a career like the captain's. I divided it under certain heads : Hardships, Dangers,

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Emergencies, Wonders, etc. These were subdivided again thus : Hardships—1, Hunger ; 2, Thirst ; 3, Cold ; 4, Heat ; 5, No Clothes ; and so forth. I got all my information from Fred, and I read my lists over and over again to get used to the ideas, and to feel brave. And on the last page I printed in red ink the word ‘Glory.’

And so the half went by and came to an end ; and when the old Doctor gave me my three prizes, and spoke of what he hoped I would do next half, my blushes were not solely from modest pride.

The first step of our runaway travels had been decided upon long ago. We were to go by barge to London. ‘And from London you can go anywhere,’ Fred said.

The day after the holidays began I saw a canal-boat lading at the wharf, and finding she was bound for London, I told Fred of it. But he said we had better wait for a barge, and that there would be one on Thursday. ‘Or if you don’t think you can be ready by then, we can wait for the next,’ he added. He seemed quite willing to wait, but (remembering that the captain’s preparations for his longest voyage had only taken him eighteen and a half minutes by the chronometer, which was afterwards damaged in a diving-bell accident, and which I had seen with my own eyes, in confirmation of the story) I said I should be ready any time at half an hour’s notice, and Thursday was fixed as the day of our departure.

To facilitate matters it was decided that Fred should invite me to spend Wednesday with him, and to stay all night, for the barge was to start at half-past six o’clock on Thursday morning.

I was very busy on Wednesday. I wrote a letter to my mother, in which I hoped I made it quite clear that ambition and not discontent was leading me to run away. I also made a will, dividing my things fairly between

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Rupert, Henrietta, and Baby Cecil, in case I should be drowned at sea. My knife, my prayer-book, the ball of string belonging to my kite, and my little tool-box I took away with me. I also took the match-box from the writing-table, but I told mother of it in the letter. The captain used to light his fires by rubbing sticks together, but I had tried it, and thought matches would be much better, at any rate to begin with. . . .

II

THE dew was still heavy on the grass when Fred and I crossed the drying-ground about five o'clock on Thursday morning, and scrambled through a hedge into our 'coast-guard' corner of the wharf. We did not want to be seen by the barge-master till we were too far from home to be put ashore.

The freshness of early morning in summer has some quality which seems to go straight to the heart. I felt intensely happy. There lay the barge, the sun shining on the clean deck, and from the dewy edges of the old ropes, and from the barge-master's zinc basin and pail put out to sweeten in the air.

'She won't leave us behind this time!' I cried, turning triumphantly to Fred.

'Take care of the pie,' said Fred.

It was a meat pie which he had taken from the larder this morning; but he had told Mrs. Johnson about it in the letter he had left behind him; and had explained that we took it instead of the breakfast we should otherwise have eaten. We felt that earth-nuts might not be forthcoming on the canal banks, or even on the wharf at Nine Elms when we reached London.

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At about a quarter to six Johnson's wharf was quite deserted. The barge-master was having breakfast ashore, and the second man had gone to the stable. 'We had better hide ourselves now,' I said. So we crept out and went on board. We had chosen our hiding-place before. Not in the cabin, of course, nor among the cargo, where something extra thrown in at the last moment might smother us if it did not lead to our discovery, but in the fore part of the boat, in a sort of well or *hold*, where odd things belonging to the barge itself were stowed away, and made sheltered nooks into which we could creep out of sight. Here we found a very convenient corner, and squatted down, with the pie at our feet, behind a hamper, a box, a coil of rope, a sack of hay, and a very large ball, crossed four ways with rope, and with a rope-tail, which puzzled me extremely.

'It's like a giant tadpole,' I whispered to Fred.

'Don't nudge me,' said Fred. 'My pockets are full, and it hurts.'

My pockets were far from light. The money-bag was heavily laden with change—small in value but large in coin. The box of matches was with it and the knife. String, nails, my prayer-book, a pencil, some writing-paper, the handbook, and a more useful hammer than the one in my tool-box filled another pocket. Some gooseberries and a piece of cake were in my trousers, and I carried the tool-box in my hands. We each had a change of linen, tied up in a pocket-handkerchief. Fred would allow of nothing else. He said that when our jackets and trousers were worn out we must make new clothes out of an old sail.

Waiting is very dull work. After a while, however, we heard voices, and the tramp of the horse, and then the barge-master and Mr. Johnson's foreman and other

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men kept coming and going on deck, and for a quarter of an hour we had as many hairbreadth escapes of discovery as the captain himself could have had in the circumstances. At last somebody threw the barge-master a bag of something (fortunately soft) which he was leaving behind, and which he chucked on to the top of my head. Then the driver called to his horse, and the barge gave a jerk, which threw Fred on to the pie, and in a moment more we were gliding slowly and smoothly down the stream.

When we were fairly off we ventured to peep out a little, and stretch our cramped limbs. There was no one on board but the barge-master, and he was at the other end of the vessel, smoking and minding his rudder. The driver was walking on the towing-path by the old grey horse. The motion of the boat was so smooth that we seemed to be lying still whilst villages and orchards and green banks and osier-beds went slowly by, as though the world were coming to show itself to us, instead of our going out to see the world.

When we passed the town we felt some anxiety for fear we should be stopped ; but there was no one on the bank, and though the towers of S. Philip and S. James appeared again and again in lessening size as we looked back, there came at last a bend in the canal, when a high bank of gorse shut out the distance, and we saw them no more.

In about an hour, having had no breakfast, we began to speak seriously of the pie. (I had observed Fred breaking little corners from the crust with an absent air more than once.) Thinking of the first subdivision under the word Hardships in my handbook, I said, ' I'm afraid we ought to wait till we are *worse hungry*.'

But Fred said, ' Oh no !' And that out adventure-seeking it was quite impossible to save and plan and

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divide your meals exactly, as you could never tell what might turn up. The captain always said, 'Take good luck and bad luck and pot-luck as they come!' So Fred assured me, and we resolved to abide by the captain's rule.

'We may have to weigh out our food with a bullet, like Admiral Bligh, next week,' said Fred.

'So we may,' said I. And the thought must have given an extra relish to the beefsteak and hard-boiled eggs, for I never tasted anything so good.

Whether the smell of the pie went aft, or whether something else made the barge-master turn round and come forward, I do not know ; but when we were encumbered with open clasp-knives, and full mouths, we saw him bearing down upon us, and in a hasty movement of retreat I lost my balance, and went backward with a crash upon a tub of potatoes.

The noise this made was not the worse part of the business. I was tightly wedged amongst the odds and ends, and the money-bag being sharply crushed against the match-box, which was by this time well warmed, the matches exploded in a body, and whilst I was putting as heroic a face as I could on the pain I was enduring in my right funny-bone, Fred cried, 'Your jacket's smoking. You're on fire !'

Whether Mr. Rowe, the barge-master, had learnt presence of mind out of a book, I do not know ; but before Fred and I could even think of what to do in the emergency, my jacket was off, the matches were overboard, and Mr. Rowe was squeezing the smouldering fire out of my pocket, rather more deliberately than most men brush their hats. Then, after civilly holding the jacket for me to put it on again, he took off his hat, took his handkerchief out of it, and wiped his head, and re-

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placing both, with his eyes upon us, said, more deliberately still, 'Well, young gentlemen, this is a nice start!'

It was impossible to resist the feeling of confidence inspired by Mr. Rowe's manner, his shrewd and stolid appearance, and his promptness in an emergency. Besides, we were completely at his mercy. We appealed to it, and told him our plans. We offered him a share of the pie too, which he accepted with conscious condescension. When the dish was empty he brought his handkerchief into use once more, and then said, in a peculiarly oracular manner, 'You just look to me, young gentlemen, and I'll put you in the way of everythink.'

The immediate advantage we took of this offer was to ask about whatever interested us in the landscape constantly passing before our eyes, or the barge-furniture at our feet. The cord-compressed balls were shore-fenders, said Mr. Rowe, and were popped over the side when the barge was likely to grate against the shore, or against another vessel.

'Them's osier-beds. They cuts 'em every year or so for basket-work. Wot's that little bird a-hanging head downwards? It's a titmouse looking for insects, that is. There's scores on 'em in the osier-beds. Aye, aye, the yellow lilies is pretty enough, but there's a lake the other way—a mile or two beyond your father's, Master Fred—where there's white water-lilies. They're pretty, if you like! It's a rum thing in spring,' continued Mr. Rowe, between puffs of his pipe, 'to see them lilies come up from the bottom of the canal; the leaves packed as neat as any parcel, and when they git to the top, they turns down and spreads out on the water as flat as you could spread a cloth upon a table.'

As a rule, Mr. Rowe could give us no names for the aquatic plants at which we clutched as we went by, nor for

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the shells we got out of the mud ; but his eye for a water-rat was like a terrier's. It was the only thing which seemed to excite him.

About mid-day we stopped by a village, where Mr. Rowe had business. The horse was to rest and bait here ; and the barge-master told us that if we had ' a shilling or so about ' us, we might dine on excellent bread and cheese at the White Lion, or even go so far as poached eggs and yet more excellent bacon, if our resources allowed of it. We were not sorry to go ashore. There was absolutely no shelter on the deck of the barge from the sunshine, which was glaringly reflected by the water. The inn parlour was low, but it was dark and cool. I felt doubtful about the luxury even of cheese after that beefsteak-pie ; but Fred smacked his lips and ordered eggs and bacon, and I paid for them out of the canvas bag.

As we sat together I said, ' I wrote a letter to my mother, Fred. Did you write to Mrs. Johnson ? '

Fred nodded, and pulled a scrap of dirty paper from his pocket, saying, ' That's the letter ; but I made a tidy copy of it afterwards. '

I have said that Fred was below me in class, though he is older ; and he was very bad at spelling. Otherwise the letter did very well, except for smudges.

' DEAR MOTHER,

' Charlie and I are going to run away at least by the time you get this we have run away but never mind for wen weve seen the wurdle were cumming back we took the pi wich I hope you wont mind as we had no brekfust and I'll bring back the dish we send our best love and I've no more to tell you to-day from your affectionate son
FRED.'

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I saw Mr. Rowe myself very busy in the bar of the White Lion, with a sheet of paper and an old steel pen, which looked as if the point had been attenuated to that hair-like fineness by sheer age. He started at the sight of me, which caused him to drop a very large blot of ink from the very sharp point of the pen on to his paper. I left him wiping it up with his handkerchief. But it never struck me that he was writing a letter on the same subject as Fred and I had been writing about. He was, however : and Mr. Johnson keeps it tied up with Fred's to this day. The spelling was of about the same order.

‘MR. JOHNSON. HONERD SIR.

‘i rites in duty bound to acquaint you that the young gentlemen is with me, looking out for Advenchurs and asking your pardon i wish they may find them as innercent as 2 Babes in the Wood on the London and Lancingford Canal were they come aboard quite unknown to me and blowed theirselves up with lucifers the fust go off and youve no need to trubble yourself sir ill keep my I on them and bring em safe to hand with return cargo and hoping you'll excuse the stamp not expecting to have to rite from the fust stoppige your obedient humble servant

‘SAMUEL ROWE.’

As I have said, we did not expect that Mr. Rowe had betrayed us by post ; but in the course of the afternoon Fred said to me, ‘ I'll tell you what, Charlie, I know old Rowe well, and he's up to any trick, and sure to want to keep in with my father. If we don't take care he'll take us back with him. And what fools we shall look then !’

The idea was intolerable ; but I warned Fred to carefully avoid betraying that we suspected him. The captain

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had had worse enemies to outwit, and had kept a pirate in good humour for a much longer voyage by affability and rum. We had no means of clouding Mr. Rowe's particularly sharp wits with grog, but we resolved to be amiable and wary, and when we did get to London to look out for the first opportunity of giving the barge-master the slip.

III

IT was a delightful feature of our first voyage—and one which we could not hope to enjoy so often in voyages to come—that we were always close to land, and this on both sides. We could touch either coast without difficulty, and as the barge stopped several times during the day to rest the horse, Fred and I had more than one chance of going ashore.

I hope to have many a voyage yet, and to see stranger people and places than I saw then, but I hardly hope ever to enjoy myself so much again. . . .

Wherever the canal seemed to spread out, and then go on again narrow and like a river, the barge-master called these lakes 'flashes' of the canal. There is no other flash on that canal so large or so beautiful as Linnet Lake, and in the middle of the lake lies the island.

It was about three o'clock, the hottest part of a summer's day, and Fred and I, rather faint with the heat, were sitting on a coil of rope holding a clean sheet, which Mr. Rowe had brought up from the cabin to protect our heads and backs from sunstroke. We had refused to take shelter below, and sat watching the fields and hedges, which seemed to palpitate in the heat as they went giddily by, and Mr. Rowe, who stood quite steady, conversing coolly with the driver. The driver had been on

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board for the last hour, the way being clear, and the old horse quite able to take care of itself and us, and he and the barge-master had pocket-handkerchiefs under their hats like the sou'-wester flaps of the captain's sea-friends. Fred had dropped his end of the sheet to fall asleep, and I was protecting us both, when the driver bawled some directions to the horse in their common language, and the barge-master said, 'Here's a bit of shade for you, Master Fred;' and we roused up and found ourselves gliding under the lee of an island covered with trees.

'Oh, *do* stop here!' we both cried.

'Well, I don't mind,' said Mr. Rowe, removing his hat, and mopping himself with his very useful pocket-handkerchief. 'Jem, there's a bit of grass there; let her have a mouthful.'

'I thought you'd like this,' he continued; 'there ain't a prettier bit between here and Pyebridge.'

It was so lovely that the same idea seized both Fred and me: Why not settle here, at least for a time? It was an uninhabited island, only waiting to be claimed by some adventurous navigator, and obviously fertile. The prospect of blackberries on the mainland was particularly fine, and how they would ripen in this blazing sun! Birds sang in the trees above; fish leaping after flies broke the still surface of the water with a musical splash below; and beyond a doubt there must be the largest and the sweetest of earth-nuts on the island, easy to get out of the deep beds of untouched leaf-mould. And when Mr. Rowe cried 'Look!' and we saw a water-fowl scud across the lake, leaving a sharp trail like a line of light behind her, we felt that we might spend all our savings in getting to the Pacific Ocean, and not find when we got there a place which offered more natural resources to the desert islander.

If the barge-master would have gone ashore on the

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mainland out of the way, and if we could have got ashore on the island without help, we should not have confided our plans to so doubtful a friend. As it was, we were obliged to tell Mr. Rowe that we proposed to found a settlement in Linnet Lake, and he was completely opposed to the idea.

It was only when he said (with that air of reserved and funded knowledge which gave such unfathomable depth to his irony, and made his sayings so oracular) —‘ There’s very different places in the world to Linnet Flash ’—that we began to be ashamed of our hasty enthusiasm, and to think that it would be a pity to stop so short in our adventurous career. So we decided to go on. . . .

IV

DURING our first day’s voyage we passed two locks. There was one not very far from home, and Fred and I had more than once been to see a barge pass it, sitting on the bank whilst the boat gradually sank to the level of the water below.

It was great fun being on board whilst the barge went down and down, though I must say we did not feel anything peculiar, we sank so gradually.

‘ Just fancy if it was a hole in the ship’s bottom,’ said Fred, ‘ and we were settling down with all on board. Some ships do, and are never heard of again.’

We amused ourselves as we went along by guessing beforehand on which shore the next house or hamlet would appear. We betted shillings on the result, but neither of us won or lost, for however often the shillings changed hands, they remained in the canvas bag. . . .

Towards evening the canal banks became dotted with



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fishers of all ages and degrees, fishing very patiently, though they did not seem to catch much.

Soon after dark we reached the town of Pyebridge.

When the barge lay-to for the night, and the driver was taking the horse away to the stable, Mr. Rowe confronted us, in his firmest manner, with the question, ‘And where are you going to sleep, young gentlemen?’

‘Where are *you* going to sleep, Mr. Rowe?’ said I, after a thoughtful pause.

‘*I* sleeps below, but the captain’s cabin is *guv* up to no one—unless it be the Queen,’ replied the barge-master, humorously but decidedly.

‘We should like to sleep on deck,’ said I.

But Mr. Rowe would not hear of it, on account of various dreadful diseases which he assured us would be contracted by sleeping ‘in the damps of the water,’ ‘the dews of the *hair*,’ and ‘the rays of the moon.’

‘There’s a hotel——’ he began; but I said at once, ‘We couldn’t afford a hotel, but if you know of any very cheap place we should be much obliged.’

Mr. Rowe took off his hat and took out his handkerchief, though it was no longer hot. Having cleared his brain, he said he ‘would see,’ and he finally led us along one of the pebbled streets of Pyebridge to a small house with a small shop-window for the sale of vegetables, and with a card announcing that there were beds to let. A very little old woman got up from behind a very big old geranium in the window as we entered, and with her Mr. Rowe made our arrangements for the night. We got a clean bed, and had a mug of milk and a slice of bread and treacle apiece for breakfast the next morning, and I paid two shillings. As I thanked the old lady and bade her good day, she called to me to hold out my hat, which

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she filled with cherries, and then stood at the door and watched us out of sight.

There was a railway station in Pyebridge, and we might easily have escaped from Mr. Rowe, and gone by train to London. But besides the fact that our funds were becoming low, the water had a new attraction for us. We had left the canal behind, and were henceforward on a river. If the wind favoured us we were to sail.

‘A canal’s nothing to a river,’ said Mr. Rowe, ‘same as a river’s nothing to the sea’; and when Fred had some difficulty in keeping his hat on in the gusty street (mine was in use as a fruit-basket), and the barge-master said it was a nice ‘fresh morning,’ I felt that life on Linnet Island would have been tame indeed compared to the hopes and fears of a career which depended on the winds and waves.

And when the boom went up the barge’s mast, and the tightly corded roll of dark canvas began to struggle for liberty, and writhe and flap with throttling noises above our heads, and when Mr. Rowe wrestled with it, and the driver helped him, and Fred and I tried to, and were all but swept overboard in consequence, whilst the barge-master encouraged himself by strange and savage sounds—and when the sunshine caught our nut-brown sail just as she spread gallantly to the breeze, our excitement grew, till we both cried in one breath:

‘This is something *like* being at sea!’

V

WE got into the Thames earlier than usual, thanks to the fair wind.

The world is certainly a very beautiful place. I suppose when I get right out into it, and go to sea, and to other

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countries, I shall think nothing of England and the Thames, but it was all new and wonderful to Fred and me then. The green slopes and fine trees, and the houses with gardens down to the river, and boats rocking by the steps, the osier islands, which Mr. Rowe called 'aits,' and the bridges where the mast had to be lowered, all the craft on the water—the red-sailed barges with one man on board—the steamers with crowded decks and gay awnings—the schooners, yachts, and pleasure boats—and all the people on shore, the fishers, and the people with water-dogs and sticks, the ladies with fine dresses and parasols, and the ragged boys who cheered us as we went by—everything we saw and heard delighted us. . . .

Later on we saw London. It was in the moonlight that we passed Chelsea. Mr. Rowe pointed out the Hospital, in which the pensioners must have been asleep, for not a wooden leg was stirring. In less than half an hour afterwards we were at the end of our voyage.

The first thing which struck me about Nine Elms was that they were not to be seen. I had thought of those elms more than once under the burning sun of the first day. I had imagined that we should land at last on some green bank, where the shelter of a majestic grove might tempt Mr. Rowe to sleep, while Fred and I should steal gently away to the neighbouring city, and begin a quite independent search for adventures. But I think I must have mixed up with my expectations a story of one of the captain's escapes—from a savage chief in a mango-grove.

Our journey's end was not quite what I had thought it would be, but it was novel and interesting enough. We seemed to have thoroughly got to the town. Very old houses with feeble lights in their paper-patched

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windows made strange reflections on the river. The pier looked dark and dirty even by moonlight, and threw blacker and stranger shadows still.

Mr. Rowe was busy and tired, and—we thought—a little inclined to be cross.

‘I wonder where we shall sleep!’ said Fred, looking timidly up at the dark old houses.

I have said before that I find it hard work to be very brave after dark, but I put a good face on the matter, and said I dared say old Rowe would find us a cheap bedroom. . . .

At length Mr. Rowe came up to me with his cap off, in the act of taking out his handkerchief, and said, ‘I suppose you’re no richer than you was yesterday, young gentlemen—how about a bed?’—I said, ‘No—o. That is, I mean if you can get us a cheap one in a safe—I mean a respectable place.’

‘If you leaves a comfortable ’ome, sir,’ moralized the barge-master, ‘to go a-looking for adventures in this fashion, you must put up with rough quarters, and wot you can get.’

‘We’ll go anywhere you think right, Mr. Rowe,’ said I diplomatically.

‘I knows a waterman,’ said Mr. Rowe, ‘that was in the Royal Navy like myself. He lives near here, and they’re decent folk. The place is a poor place, but you’ll have to make the best of it, young gentlemen, and a shilling ’ll cover the damage. If you wants supper you must pay for it. Give the missis the money, and she’ll do the best she can, and bring you the change to a half-farthing.’

[The two boys slept at the house of Mr. Rowe’s friend, and decided to run away still more decisively and go to sea. The next morning they hurried away to the docks by train from Fenchurch Street.]

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VI

IF anything could smell nastier than John's berth in Nine Elms, it is Fenchurch Street Station. And I think it is worse in this way: John's berth smelt horrible, but it was warm and weather-tight. You never swallow a drop of pure air in Fenchurch Street Station, and yet you cannot find a corner in which you can get out of the draughts.

With one gale blowing on my right from an open door, and another gale blowing on my left down some steps, and nasty smells blowing from every point of the compass, I stood at a dirty little hole in a dirty wooden wall and took our tickets. I had to stand on tiptoe to make the young man see me.

'What is the cheapest kind of tickets you have, if you please?' I inquired, with the canvas bag in my hand.

'Third class,' said the young man, staring very hard at me, which I thought rather rude. 'Except working-men's tickets, and they're not for this train.'

'Two third-class tickets for Victoria Docks, then, if you please,' said I.

'Single or return?' said he.

'I beg your pardon?' I said, for I was puzzled.

'Are you coming back to-day?' he inquired.

'Oh dear, no!' said I, for some of the captain's voyages had lasted for years; but the question made me anxious, as I knew nothing of railway rules, and I added, 'Does it matter?'

'Not by no means,' replied the young man smartly, and he began to whistle, but stopped himself to ask, 'Custom House or Tidal Basin?'

I had no alternative but to repeat, 'I beg your pardon?'

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He put his face right through the hole and looked at me. 'Will you take your ticket for Custom House or Tidal Basin?' he repeated; 'either will do for Victoria Docks.'

'Then whichever you please,' said I, as politely as I could.

The young man took out two tickets and snapped them impatiently in something; and as a fat woman was squeezing me from behind, I was glad to take what I could get and go back to Fred.

He was taking care of our two bundles and the empty pie-dish.

That pie-dish was a good deal in our way. Fred wanted to get rid of it, and said he was sure his mother would not want us to be bothered with it; but Fred had promised in his letter to bring it back, and he could not break his word. I told him so, but I said as he did not like to be seen with it I would carry it. So I did.

With a strong breeze aft, we were driven upstairs in the teeth of a gale, and ran before a high wind down a platform where, after annoying one of the railway men very much by not being able to guess which was the train, and having to ask him, we got in among a lot of rough-looking people, who were very civil and kind. A man with a black face and a white jacket said he would tell us when we got to Custom House, and he gave me his seat by the window, that I might look out.

What struck me as rather odd was that everybody in the third-class carriage seemed to have bundles like ours, and yet they couldn't all be running away. One thin woman with a very troublesome baby had three. Perhaps it is because portmanteaus and things of that sort are rather expensive.

Fred was opposite to me. It was a bright sunny morning; a fresh breeze blew, and in the sunlight the backs of

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endless rows of shabby houses looked more cheerful than usual, though very few of the gardens had anything in them but dirt and cats, and very many of the windows had the week's wash hanging out on strings and poles. The villages we had passed on the canal banks all looked pretty and interesting, but I think that most of the places we saw out of the window of the train would look very ugly on a dull day.

I fancy there were poplar-trees at a place called Poplar, and that I thought it must be called after them ; but Fred says No, and we have never been there since, so I cannot be sure about it. If not, I must have dreamt it.

I did fall asleep in the corner, I know, I was so very much tired, and we had had no breakfast, and I sat on the side where the wind blows in, which I think helped to make me sleepy. I was wakened partly by the pie-dish slipping off my lap, and partly by Fred saying in an eager tone :

‘ Oh, Charlie ! LOOK ! *Are they all ships ?* ’

We stuffed our heads through the window, and my hat was nearly blown away, so the man with the black face and the white jacket gave it to the woman with the troublesome baby to take care of for me, and he held us by our legs for fear we should fall out.

On we flew ! There was wind enough in our faces to have filled the barge-sail three times over, and Fred licked his lips and said, ‘ I do believe there's salt in it ! ’

But what he woke me up to show me drove me nearly wild. When I had seen a couple of big barges lying together with their bare masts leaning towards each other I used to think how dignified and beautiful they looked. But here were hundreds of masts, standing as thick as tree-trunks in a fir-wood, and they were not bare poles, but lofty and slender, and crossed by innumerable yards,

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and covered with ropes in orderly profusion, which showed in the sunshine as cobwebs shine out in a field in summer. Gay flags and pennons fluttered in the wind ; brown sails, grey sails, and gleaming white sails went up and down ; and behind it all the water sparkled and dazzled our eyes like the glittering reflections from a mirror moving in the sun.

As we ran nearer the ropes looked thicker, and we could see the devices on the flags. And suddenly, straining his eyes at the yards of a vessel in the thick of the ship-forest, on which was something black, like a spider with only four legs, Fred cried, ‘ It’s a sailor !’

I saw him quite well. And seeing him higher up than on any tree one could ever climb, with the sunny sky above him and the shining water below him, I could only mutter out with envious longing—‘ How happy he must be !’

VII

I HAD taken Fred’s bundle because he was so tired, and I suppose it was because I was staring helplessly about that a dirty boy a good deal bigger than either of us came up and pulled his dirty hair and said :

‘ Carry your things for you, sir ?’

‘ No, thank you,’ said I, moving on with the bundles and the pie-dish ; but as the boy would walk by me I said :

‘ We want some breakfast very much, but we haven’t much money.’ And, remembering the cost of our supper, I added, ‘ Could we get anything here for about twopence-halfpenny or threepence apiece ?’

There was a moment’s pause. and then the boy gave a long whistle.

‘ Vy, I thought you was swells !’ said he.

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I really do not know whether it was because I did not like to be supposed to be a poor person when it came to the point, or whether it was because of that bad habit of mine of which even Weston's ballad has not quite cured me, of being ready to tell people more about my affairs than it can be interesting for them to hear or discreet for me to communicate, but I replied at once : ' We are gentlemen ; but we are going in search of adventures, and we don't want to spend more money than we can help till we see what we may want it for when we get to foreign countries.'

' You're going to sea, then, *harc* you ?' said the boy, keeping up with us.

' Yes,' said I ; ' but could you tell us where to get something to eat before we go ?'

' There's a shop I knows on,' said our new friend, ' where they sells prime pudding at a penny a slice. The plums goes all through and no mistake. Three slices would be threepence : one for you, one for him, and one for my trouble in showing you the way. Threepence more's a quart of stout, and we drink fair by turns. Shall I take your purse and pay it for you ? They might cheat a stranger.'

' No, thank you,' said I ; ' but we should like some pudding if you will show us the way.'

The slices were small, but then they were very heavy. We had two each.

It was not so easy to get to the ships as I had expected. There were gates to pass through, and they were kept by a porter. He let some people in and turned others back.

' Have you got an order to see the docks ?' asked the boy.

I confessed that we had not, but added that we wanted very much to get in.

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‘My eyes!’ said the bad boy, doubling himself in a fit of amusement, ‘I believe you’re both going for stowaways.’

‘What do you mean by stowaways?’ I asked.

‘Stowaways is chaps that hides aboard vessels going out of port, to get their passage free gratis for nothing.’

‘Do a good many manage it?’ I asked with an anxious mind.

‘There ain’t a vessel leaves the docks without one and sometimes more aboard. The captain never looks that way, not by no accident whatsoever. He don’t lift no tarpaulins while the ship’s in dock. But when she gets to sea the captain gets his eyesight back, and he takes it out of the stowaways for their wittles then. Oh yes, rather so!’ said the bad boy.

There was a crowd at the gates.

‘Hold your bundles down on your right side,’ said the boy, ‘and go in quickly after any respectable-looking cove you see.’

Fred had got his own bundle now, and we followed our guide’s directions, and went through the gates after an elderly, well-dressed man. The boy seemed to try to follow us, squeezing very close up to me, but the gatekeeper stopped him. When we were on the other side I saw him bend down and wink backwards at the gatekeeper through his straddled legs. Then he stood derisively on his head. After which he went away as a catherine-wheel, and I saw him no more.

We were among the ships at last! Vessels very different from Mr. Rowe’s barge, or even the threepenny steamboat. Lofty and vast, with shining decks of marvellous cleanliness, and giant figure-heads like dismembered Jins out of some Arabian tale. Streamers of many colours high up in the forests of masts, and seamen of

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many nations on the decks and wharves below, moved idly in the breeze, which was redolent of many kinds of cargo. Indeed, if the choice of our ship had not been our chief care, the docks and warehouses would have fascinated us little less than the shipping. Here were huge bales of cotton packed as thickly as bricks in a brick-field. There were wine-casks innumerable, and in another place the air was aromatic with so large a cargo of coffee that it seemed as if no more could be required in this country for some generations.

It was very entertaining, and Fred was always calling to me to look at something new, but my mind was with the shipping. There was a good deal of anxiety on it too. The sooner we chose our ship and 'stowed away' the better. I hesitated between sailing-vessels and steamers. I did not believe that one of the captain's adventures happened on board any ship that could move faster than it could sail. And yet I was much attracted by some good-looking steamships. Even their huge funnels had a look of power, I thought, among the masts, like old and hollow oaks in a wood of young and slender trees.

One of these was close in dock, and we could see her well. There were some casks on deck, and by them lay a piece of tarpaulin which caught my eye, and recalled what the bad boy had said about captains and stowaways. Near the gangway were standing two men who did not seem to be sailors. They were respectably dressed; one had a book and a pencil, and they looked, I thought, as if they might have authority to ask our business in the docks, so I drew Fred back under shelter of some piled-up boxes.

'When does she sail?' asked the man with the book.

'To-morrow morning, sir,' replied the other.

And then they crossed the gangway and went into a warehouse opposite.

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It was noon, and being the men's dinner-time, the docks were not very busy. At this moment there was not a soul in sight. I grasped Fred's arm, and hoisted the bundle and pie-dish well under my own.

'That's our ship,' I said triumphantly ; 'come along !'

VIII

WE crossed the gangway unperceived. 'The casks !' I whispered, and we made our way to the corner I had noticed. If Fred's heart beat as chokingly as mine did, we were far too much excited to speak, as we settled ourselves into a corner, not quite as cosy as our hiding-place in the forehold of the barge ; and drew the tarpaulin over our heads, resting some of the weight of it on the casks behind, that we might not be smothered.

I have waited for the kitchen kettle to boil when Fred and I wanted to make 'hot grog' with raspberry-vinegar and nutmeg at his father's house ; I have waited for a bonfire to burn up, when we wanted to roast potatoes ; I have waited for it to leave off raining when my mother would not let us go out for fear of catching colds ; but I never knew time pass so slowly as when Fred and I were stowaways on board the steamship *Atalanta*.

He was just beginning to complain, when we heard men coming on board. This amused us for a bit, but we were stowed so that we could not see them, and we dared not look out. Neither dared we speak, except when we heard them go a good way off, and then we whispered. So second after second, and minute after minute, and hour after hour went by, and Fred became very restless.

'She's to sail in the morning,' I whispered.

'But where are we to get dinner and tea and supper ?'

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asked Fred indignantly. I was tired, and felt cross on my own account.

‘ You said yourself we might have to weigh out our food with a bullet like Admiral Bligh, next week.’

‘ He must have had something, or he couldn’t have weighed it,’ retorted Fred ; ‘ and how do we know if they’ll ever give us anything to eat on board this ship ?’

‘ I dare say we can buy food at first, till they find us something to do for our meals,’ said I.

‘ How much money is there left ?’ asked Fred.

I put my hand into my pocket for the canvas bag—but it was gone !

There could be little doubt that the bad boy had picked my pocket at the gate, but I had a sense of guiltiness about it, for most of the money was Fred’s. This catastrophe completely overwhelmed him, and he cried and grumbled till I was nearly at my wits’ end. I could not stop him, though heavy steps were coming quite close to us.

‘ Sh ! sh !’ muttered I, ‘ if you go on like that they’ll certainly find us, and then we shall have managed all this for nothing, and might as well have gone back with old Rowe.’

‘ Which, wind and weather permitting, young gentlemen, you will,’ said a voice just above us . . . and I do not think I felt any additional shock of astonishment when strong hands lifted the tarpaulin from our heads, and—grave amid several grinning faces—we saw the barge-master.

How he approached us, and how Fred begged him to take us home, and how I besought him to let us go to sea, it would be tedious to relate. I have no doubt now that he never swerved from his intention of taking us back, but he preferred to do it by fair means if possible. So he fubbed me off, and took us round the docks to amuse us, and talked of dinner in a way that went to Fred’s heart.

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But when I found that we were approaching the gates once more, I stopped dead short. As we went about the docks I had replied to the barge-master's remarks as well as I could, but I had never ceased thinking of the desire of my heart, and I resolved to make one passionate appeal to his pity.

'Mr. Rowe,' I said, in a choking voice, 'please don't take me home ! I would give anything in the world to go to sea. Why shouldn't I be a sailor when I want to ? Take Fred home if he wants to go, and tell them that I'm all right, and mean to do my duty and come back a credit to them.'

Mr. Rowe's face was inscrutable, and I pleaded harder.

'You're an old navy man, you know, Rowe,' I said, 'and if you recommended me to the captain of one of these ships for a cabin-boy, I'll be bound they'd take me.'

'Mr. Charles,' said the old man earnestly, 'you couldn't go for a cabin-boy, you don't know——'

'You think I can't rough it,' I interrupted impatiently ; 'but try me and see. I know what I'm after,' I added consequentially ; 'and I'll bear what I have to bear, and do what I'm set to do if I can get afloat. I'll be a captain some day, and give orders instead of taking them.'

Mr. Rowe drew up to attention and took off his hat. 'And wanting an able-bodied seaman in them circumstances, sir, for any voyage you likes to make,' said he emphatically, 'call for Samuel Rowe.' He then wiped the passing enthusiasm from the crown of his head with his handkerchief, and continued—with the judicious diplomacy for which he was remarkable—'But of course, sir, it's the Royal Navy you'll begin in, as a midshipman. It's seamanship *you* wants to learn, not swabbing decks or emptying buckets below whilst others is aloft. Your

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father's son would be a good deal out of place, sir, as cabin-boy in a common trading vessel.'

Mr. Rowe's speech made an impression, and I think he saw that it did.

'Look here, Master Charles,' said he, 'you've a gentleman's feelings : come home now, and bear me out with your widowed mother and your only sister, sir, and with Master Fred's father, that I'm in duty bound to, and promised to deliver safe and sound as return cargo, wind and weather permitting.'

'Oh, come home ! come home !' reiterated Fred.

I stood speechless for a minute or two. All around and above me rose the splendid masts, trellised with the rigging that I longed to climb. The refreshing scent of tar mingled with the smells of the various cargoes. The coming and going of men who came and went to and fro the ends of the earth stirred all my pulses to restlessness. And above the noises of their coming and going I heard the lapping of the water of the incoming tide against the dock, which spoke with a voice more powerful than that of Mr. Rowe.

And yet I went with him.

It was not because the canvas bag was empty, not because Fred would not stay with me, but when Mr. Rowe spoke of my widowed mother and of Henrietta, he touched a sore point on my conscience. I had had an uneasy feeling from the first that there was something rather mean in my desertion of them. Pride, and I hope some less selfish impulse, made me feel that I could never be quite happy—even on the mainmast top—if I knew that I had behaved ill to them.

I could not very well speak, but I turned round and began to walk in the direction of the dock gates. Mr. Rowe behaved uncommonly kindly. He said nothing

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more, but turned as if I had given the word of command, and walked respectfully just behind me. I resolved not to look back, and I did not. I was quite determined, too, about one thing : Mr. Rowe should never be able to say he had seen me make a fool of myself after I had made up my mind. But in reality I had very hard work to keep from beginning to cry, just when Fred was beginning to leave off.

I screwed up my eyes and kept them dry, however, but as we went through the gate there came in a sailor with a little bundle like ours, and a ship's name on his hat. His hat sat as if a gale were just taking it off, and his sea-blue shirt was blown open by breezes that my back was turned upon. In spite of all I could do one tear got through my eyelashes and ran down, and I caught it on my lips.

It was a very bitter tear, and as salt as the salt, salt sea !

The Little Alexandre and Boudoux the Ravenous



WAS now ten years old, and it was time to take my mental education seriously in hand. My physical training was proceeding fast enough. I could throw stones like David, I could draw a bow like a Balearic archer, I could ride like a Numidian ; but

I could not climb trees or steeples.

I have travelled much, and, whether in the Alps or in Sicily, in Calabria, or in Spain or in Africa, I have gone over difficult enough places ; but I only crossed them because I was obliged to ; and no one but myself will ever now know what I endured in the process. My terror is purely nervous, and therefore incurable ; it is so great that, if I were given the choice, I would rather fight a duel than climb to the top of the column in the place Vendôme. . . .

They had tried to get me entered free at all the colleges endowed for the education of sons of superior officers. But, in spite of the most urgent representations, they could neither obtain for me admission to the Prytanée nor a bursary in any Imperial lycée. . . .

The Little Alexandre and

None of the applications on my behalf, then, had been successful, when one of my cousins died—the Abbe Conseil. . . .

I paid two visits a year to this cousin Conseil, one on New Year's Day, the other on his birthday. He would give me a kiss on one cheek and a slap on the other, and there ended his generosity.

Once he gave me half a crown. But my mother and I never went again, and he died the same year. He left an income of something like 12,000 livres behind him, to a certain Miss Ryan.

My mother received a legacy of 1,500 francs, and to one of his relatives he bequeathed a bursary at the Seminary of Soissons.

My destiny was clear . . . I was to be the future Seminarist.

But the question remained how to get me there—not an easy matter. I had an unreasoning aversion to such a plan.

My mother's mind was not made up. She, poor woman, was incapable of insisting on anything that she saw was the least distasteful to me; but she desired to give me as good an education as possible. The thought of making a priest of me had, however, never entered her head. I believe, indeed, if she had thought such a thing were likely to come of it she would have been the first to oppose the plan, which she now put before me in the most glowing colours.

Two or three months passed, I resisting and my mother begging and praying me to go.

Finally, one fine day when she had used every inducement she could think of to make me go, promising solemnly, on her word of honour, that I should always be free to come home if I did not like the rules of the

Seminary, I let fall the fatal *yes*, and I consented to all her wishes.

There was a week granted me to make my preparations for departure. It was a great separation, and it cost my mother as much as it did me ; but she tried to hide her tears, till I unjustly imagined she was quite pleased to get rid of me.

The day before that on which I was to travel in the coach which plied twice a week between Villers-Cotterets and Soissons, as I was collecting all my little wants for my school life, I discovered I hadn't an inkstand. I told my mother of this, and she, recognizing the justice of my request, asked me what sort I would like.

I had luxurious ideas concerning that inkstand. I wished a horn inkstand with a place for pens. But, as my mother did not clearly understand my explanations, she gave me twelve sous, and told me to go and buy the inkstand myself.

Please pay great attention to this little matter ; for, puerile though it may seem, it changed the whole course of my life.

I hurried off to a grocer named Devaux. . . .

The grocer had not the kind of inkpot I wanted ; but he promised to get me one by evening.

When evening came, I returned, and he had the inkpot ready for me ; but as luck would have it I found my cousin Cécile in the shop.

She was very glad to see me ; she took the opportunity to wish me all possible success in the career I had chosen, and she promised that, as soon as I was ordained, she would ask me to become her spiritual director.

I cannot say whether it was that her sarcasm galled me past bearing, or whether the responsibility of the suggested office seemed too heavy, but I flung the inkpot

The Little Alexandre and

in the grocer's face. I pocketed my twelve sous, and I rushed out of the shop crying : ' Very well ; I don't care. I will not go to the Seminary !'

Like Cæsar I had crossed my Rubicon : but the next step was to try and escape my mother's urgent entreaties, which I might not perhaps have been able to withstand.

I ventured on my first wilful act. I bought a loaf and a sausage with my twelve sous, food to last me two or three days, in fact, and then I went to find Boudoux.

I must explain who he was.

Boudoux was a character. . . .

I have never seen such a voracious eater as was Boudoux.

One day he came to our house, and a calf had just been killed ; he gazed at it with longing eyes, and my father said to him :

' Do you want to eat the whole of it ? You can have it.'

' Oh ! general, you are joking !' was Boudoux's reply.

' Upon my word I am not.'

' Indeed I should love it, general.'

They put the whole calf in the oven, and when it was cooked Boudoux ate it all.

When he had picked the last bone, my father complimented him on his performance.

' I hope your hunger is satisfied now, Boudoux ?' he said.

' Put the mother on the spit, general,' replied Boudoux, ' and you will see.'

My father drew back, for he was fond of his cow, and Boudoux was likely to leave nothing of her but her horns.

I could cite other instances than this ; but they would pale before the one I have just given.

One day at the opening of the hunting season M. Danré,

Boudoux the Ravenous

of Vouty, had two dozen chickens on the spit. Boudoux looked at them as he had looked at my father's veal; and M. Danré was unwise enough to make a proposal to him similar to the one which had been made at our house.

Boudoux made twenty-four mouthfuls of the twenty-four chickens.

Later (I must not stop much longer over Boudoux's appetite), after the Restoration, when the Prince de Condé came to hunt at Villers-Cotterets, he brought a pack of a hundred and twenty hounds.

Boudoux obtained the post of kennelman to the huntsmen, and it was therefore his business to distribute food to the princely Roquadors and Barbaros.

It was soon discovered that although the purchase of bread and meat was the same as always, the poor beasts grew thin and languid and unsteady on their legs.

Suspicious were aroused, and Boudoux was watched.

It was found out that he himself had eaten the portions of forty dogs—one-third, that was, of the whole food supply.

The prince ordered that Boudoux's portion of food should be served separately to him each day, and that this portion should be as much as for forty dogs.

So much, then, for Boudoux's appetite. We will next speak of his physical attainments, and lastly of his moral qualities.

Physically, Boudoux seemed as though he were of the refuse of creation: Quasimodo would have appeared almost beautiful beside him. Boudoux's face was not merely pitted, it was scarred, furred, and almost eaten away by smallpox; his eyes, drawn out of their sockets by the hollowness of his eyelids, seemed to hang over his cheeks, watery and bloodshot; his nose was depressed

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instead of being raised, and flattened down on his upper lip; . . . the upper lip curved like a serpent's, almost round to his ears, and gave his mouth the appearance of being able to accommodate a whole leg of mutton at once; the picture was completed by hair that Polyphemus himself might have envied; his beard was scanty, red and coarse, and only grew out of the rare spaces not covered with pox marks.

His head was supported by a body five feet nine inches in height, but that height was never realized on account of a defect in one leg, which doubled and yielded under him to such an extent, with every step he took, that the lower part of his leg and top of his thigh looked like the two pointers of a compass opened triangle-fashion.

For all that, Boudoux had almost superhuman strength. During a house move he was worth his weight in gold: he would carry trunks, sideboards, bedsteads, tables, on his head, and, as his limping stride measured over a yard and a half at each step he took, he could move the entire furniture of one house to another in a trice.

Furthermore, Boudoux, who could have taken up a horse by its hind hoofs and torn off its shoes like Alcidas; or, like Samson, have taken the gates of Gaza from their hinges and carried them on his back; or, like Milo of Crotona, have gone round the circus with an ox on his shoulders, and then felled it and eaten it; Boudoux, I say, with the strength of an elephant, was as gentle as a lamb.

And now as to his character.

Although ugly, repulsive, hideous to look at, everybody liked Boudoux. He lodged with his aunt, Mademoiselle Chapuis, the postmistress, but he had his meals everywhere. Three times a day he went the round of the town, and, like the begging Friars of the ancient monasteries,

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he collected enough to feed a convent ; only, as he had no monks to feed, he ate the whole supply himself.

It was not enough to satisfy him, but it just kept him going.

Boudoux had a calling, or rather two callings, for he worked *à la marette* and *à la pipée*.

We must explain to Parisians, who will probably not know, what are the two trades we have referred to under the names of *marette* and *pipée*. We will take *marette* first.

There are very few forests, woods, or covers that do not contain some pools of water, commonly called *mares* ; for instance, the *mare* d'Auteuil, which has been noted as long as I can remember. At these pools in the woods, forests, and covers, birds are accustomed to drink at certain times a day. Here the bird-catcher drives small birch twigs coated with bird-lime into the soft, muddy soil along the edges of the pools, and when the birds come to drink they are caught on these limed twigs.

This is called snaring a *mare*, and in the clever setting of these traps consists the whole success and art of the hunter.

And as, to explain everything fully, there are more small *mares* than large ones, and as the smaller *mares* are better than the large, because they need less bird-lime, and consequently are less expensive, these small *mares* are called '*marettes*,' and in the language of the snarers of small birds, the phrase to work *à la marette* indicates the nature of their calling.

La pipée is worked in the same way, but with differences of detail. A tree high enough to out-top the rest of the coppice is chosen ; it is stripped of its smaller branches, and these are replaced by lime-twigs fitted into notches made by a bill-hook ; the bird-catchers then

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take their place inside a hut made of foliage constructed round the trunk of the tree, and they attract all the birds in the district by three methods.

The first is to attach an owl to the centre of the tree.

The owl, with his buff plumage and great round eyes, plays in the forest the part that Jean Jacques Rousseau played in the streets of Paris when he went forth dressed as an Armenian.

All the street arabs ran after the Genevan philosopher. All the birds chase the owl.

But a fate awaits these poor creatures that did not overtake the hooligans : when they fly against the tree, in attacking the owl which is fastened to the tree, each bird that settles on a lime-twigg is lost ; he falls from bough to bough, and passes from freedom to a cage, lucky if he does not go from his cage to the spit.

The second method of attraction is to take a jay.

Out of a hare one can only make jugged hare, but in the case of a jay something else can be constructed.

It must, however, be a living jay, that is a condition *sine quâ non*.

The jay has a shocking reputation in the bird world.

It is accused by la Fontaine of stealing peacock's feathers ; and, like all reputations made by man, this one, perhaps, is least deserved ; another accusation brought against it—and a far more serious charge in the eyes of the birds—is that it eats the eggs of its smaller and weaker brethren. So the hatred in which birds hold this glutton is in proportion to the number of eggs they lay ; the titmouse, for instance, which sometimes lays as many as twenty to twenty-five tiny eggs, is the most relentless against this robber ; next come *fourgons*, which lay fifteen ; chaffinches, which lay five or six ; and last, red-breasts and warblers, which lay three or four. So they

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take a live jay, stretch out his wings and pull the feathers from it.

It is not a very humane process, but it is very efficacious.

The cry of the jay is a frightful noise : as each feather is pulled out, the jay utters that cry, and at each cry flocks of chaffinches, titmice, *fourgons*, warblers, and robins come flying down to enjoy their enemy's discomfort ; for they are not deceived, they recognize his cry as one of pain.

But this time they are punished for their want of forgiveness towards their enemy, and the lime-twigs execute justice on their hard hearts.

The success of the third means depends entirely on the degree of skill with which the bird-catcher has been naturally endowed, in producing sounds to imitate the songs of birds, by the aid of blades of couch-grass or a piece of glossy silk. The musician who can imitate birds' notes requires no jay or owl to help him ; he retires into his hut, counterfeits cries of distress of the different birds he wants to catch, and all the birds of the same species that are in the district flock to the call.

I must say, however, that I have met few *pipeurs* (and I have known a great number) who have reached such a pitch of perfection.

But Boudoux, who spoke no dead language and could only talk his own among living ones, and that very imperfectly, took, in the matter of birds, the first rank as a philologist, and not merely in the forest of Villers-Cotterets, but, I dare venture to assert, in any forest of the world.

There was not an ornithological language or jargon or patois that he could not talk, from the language of the crow to that of the wren.

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He held those of his confrères in contempt who made use of grass and silk, for he could imitate the cry of an owl so perfectly that I have seen one come and perch on his hat as on the helmet of Minerva.

I went to find Boudoux. I unburdened my heart to him, and I asked him to hide me for two or three days in one of his huts.

Of course he granted my request.

His only condition was that, as it was autumn, I ought to take a blanket with me, as the nights were not so warm as they had been.

I returned home, slipped into my room, took a blanket off my bed, and wrote on a bit of paper :

‘Do not be anxious about me, mother dear ; I have run away, because I do not want to be a priest.’

Then I rejoined Boudoux, who had collected his evening food and was waiting for me at the entrance to the park.

Boudoux had two snaring pools, one on the road to Vivières, and the other on the road to Compiègne. Near the pool on the road to Compiègne he had a hut, and it was in this hut that I asked shelter from the Seminary of Soissons.

I spent three days and three nights in the forest. At night, I rolled myself in my blanket, and I must own that I slept without any feeling of remorse ; by day I wandered from one *mare* to another, collecting the snared birds. We took an incalculable number of birds during those three days ; by the third day, the two *mares* were completely *ruined* until the next breeding season. I emphasize the word *ruined*, because that is the technical term for it.

Those three days increased my antipathy towards the Seminary, but at the same time it gave me a keen taste for *la marette*.



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At the end of these three days I returned, but I did not dare to go straight to the house. I went to find my good friend Madame Darcourt, and I begged her to announce to my mother the return of her prodigal son, and to smooth the way for my re-entry under the maternal roof.

Alas ! the more prodigal the children, the warmer their reception ! When the original prodigal son returned home to his father, after three years' absence, they killed a calf ; if he had not returned until after an absence of six years, they would have killed an ox.

My mother hugged me to her and called me a bad boy. She promised me that there should be no more talk between us of my going to the Seminary, delighted to think that I should not leave her. She reserved all her wrath for Boudoux, and, the first time she saw him, poor as we were, she gave him five francs.

Just think what a trivial circumstance decided the course of my life. If the grocer had had the inkstand I wanted that morning, I should not have returned to his shop in the evening ; I should not have met Cécile there ; she would not have made that joke which exasperated me ; I should not have placed myself under Boudoux's care ; and the next day I should have gone to Soissons and entered the Seminary. When at the Seminary my latent inclinations for a religious life would have developed, and I might have become a great preacher instead of what I am—namely, a poor poet. I wonder whether that would have been better or worse ?

Surprising Adventures of Master Charles Summerton



Exactly half-past nine o'clock on the morning of Saturday, August 26, 1865, Master Charles Summerton, aged five years, disappeared mysteriously from his paternal residence on Folsom Street, San Francisco.

At twenty-five minutes past nine he had been observed, by the butcher, amusing himself by going through that popular youthful exercise known as 'turning the crab,' a feat in which he was singularly proficient.

At a court of inquiry summarily held in the back parlour at 10.15, Bridget, cook, deposed to have detected him at twenty minutes past nine, in the felonious abstraction of sugar from the pantry, which, by the same token, had she known what was a-comin', she'd have never previnted.

Patsey, a shrill-voiced youth from a neighbouring alley, testified to having seen 'Chowley' at half-past nine in front of the butcher's shop round the corner, but as this young gentleman chose to throw out the gratuitous belief that the missing child had been converted into sausages by the butcher, his testimony was received with some

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caution by the female portion of the court, and with down-right scorn and contumely by its masculine members.

But whatever might have been the hour of his departure, it was certain that from half-past ten a.m. until nine p.m., when he was brought home by a policeman, Charles Summerton was missing.

Being naturally of a reticent disposition, he has since resisted, with but one exception, any attempt to wrest from him a statement of his whereabouts during that period.

That exception has been myself.

He has related to me the following in the strictest confidence :

His intention on leaving the doorsteps of his dwelling was to proceed without delay to Van Dieman's Land, by way of Second and Market Streets.

This project was subsequently modified so far as to permit a visit to Otaheite, where Captain Cook was killed.

The outfit for his voyage consisted of two car tickets, five cents in silver, a fishing-line, the brass capping of a spool of cotton, which, in his eyes, bore some resemblance to metallic currency, and a Sunday-school library ticket.

His garments, admirably adapted to the exigencies of any climate, were severally, a straw hat with a pink ribbon, a striped shirt, over which a pair of trousers, uncommonly wide in comparison to their length, were buttoned, striped balmoral stockings, which gave his youthful legs something of the appearance of wintergreen candy, and copper-toed shoes with iron heels, capable of striking fire from any flag-stone.

This latter quality Master Charley could not help feeling would be of infinite service to him in the wilds of Van Dieman's Land, which, as pictorially represented in his

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geography, seemed to be deficient in corner groceries and matches.

Exactly as the clock struck the half-hour, the short legs and straw hat of Master Charles Summerton disappeared around the corner.

He ran rapidly, partly by way of inuring himself to the fatigues of the journey before him, and partly by way of testing his speed with that of a North Beach car which was proceeding in his direction.

The conductor not being aware of this generous and lofty emulation, and being somewhat concerned at the spectacle of a pair of very short, twinkling legs so far in the rear, stopped his car, and generously assisted the youthful Summerton upon the platform.

From this point a hiatus of several hours' duration occurs in Master Charles's narrative.

He is under the impression that he 'rode out' not only his two tickets, but that he became subsequently indebted to the company for several trips to and from the opposite termini, and that at last, resolutely refusing to give any explanation of his conduct, he was finally ejected, much to his relief, on a street corner.

Although, as he informs us, he felt perfectly satisfied with this arrangement, he was impelled, under the circumstances, to hurl after the conductor an opprobrious appellation, which he had ascertained from Patsey was the correct thing in such emergencies, and possessed peculiarly exasperating properties.

We now approach a thrilling part of the narrative, before which most of the adventures of *The Boys' Own Book* pale into insignificance.

There are times when the recollection of this adventure causes Master Charles to break out in a cold sweat, and he has several times since its occurrence been awakened by

Master Charles Summerton

lamentations and outcries in the night season by merely dreaming of it.

On the corner of the street lay several large empty sugar hogsheads.

A few young gentlemen disported themselves therein, armed with sticks, with which they removed the sugar which still adhered to the joints of the staves, and conveyed it to their mouths.

Finding a cask not yet pre-empted, Master Charles set to work, and for a few moments revelled in a wild saccharine dream, whence he was finally aroused by an angry voice and the rapidly retreating footsteps of his comrades.

An ominous sound smote his ear, and the next moment he felt the cask wherein he lay uplifted and set upright against the wall.

He was a prisoner, but as yet undiscovered.

Being satisfied in his mind that hanging was the systematic and legalized penalty for the outrage he had committed, he kept down manfully the cry that rose to his lips.

In a few moments he felt the cask again lifted by a powerful hand, which appeared above him at the edge of his prison, and which he concluded belonged to the ferocious giant Blunderbore, whose features and limbs he had frequently met in coloured pictures.

Before he could recover from his astonishment, his cask was placed with several others on a cart, and rapidly driven away.

The ride which ensued, he describes as being fearful in the extreme.

Rolled around like a pill in a box, the agonies which he suffered may be hinted at, not spoken.

Evidences of that protracted struggle were visible in

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his garments, which were of the consistency of syrup, and his hair, which for several hours, under the treatment of hot water, yielded a thin treacle.

At length the cart stopped on one of the wharves, and the cartman began to unload.

As he tilted over the cask in which Charles lay, an exclamation broke from his lips, and the edge of the cask fell from his hands, sliding its late occupant upon the wharf.

To regain his short legs, and to put the greatest possible distance between himself and the cartman, were his first movements on regaining his liberty.

He did not stop until he had reached the corner of Front Street.

Another blank succeeds in this veracious history.

He cannot remember how or when he found himself in front of the circus tent.

He has an indistinct recollection of having passed through a long street of stores which were all closed, and which made him fear that it was Sunday, and that he had spent a miserable night in the sugar cask.

But he remembers hearing the sound of music within the tent, and of creeping on his hands and knees, when no one was looking, until he passed under the canvas.

His description of the wonders contained within that circle ; of the terrific feats which were performed by a man on a pole, since practised by him in the back yard ; of the horses, one of which was spotted and resembled an animal in his Noah's Ark, hitherto unrecognized and undefined, of the female equestrians, whose dresses could only be equalled in magnificence to the frocks of his sister's doll, of the painted clown, whose jokes excited a merriment, somewhat tinged by an undefined fear, was an effort of language which this pen could but weakly transcribe, and



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which no quantity of exclamation points could sufficiently illustrate.

He is not quite certain what followed.

He remembers that almost immediately on leaving the circus it became dark, and that he fell asleep, waking up at intervals on the corners of the streets, on front steps, in somebody's arms, and finally in his own bed.

He was not aware of experiencing any regret for his conduct ; he does not recall feeling at any time a disposition to go home—he remembers distinctly that he felt hungry.

He has made this disclosure in confidence.

He wishes it to be respected.

He wants to know if you have five cents about you.

Tom, Huck, and Joe



It was not long before Tom's mind was made up. He was gloomy and desperate. He was a forsaken, friendless boy, he said ; nobody loved him : when they found out what they had driven him to, perhaps they would be sorry ; he had tried to do right and get along, but they would not let him ; since nothing would do them but to be rid of him, let it be so ; and let them blame him for the consequences—why shouldn't they ? what right had the friendless to complain ? Yes, they had forced him to it at last : he would lead a life of crime. There was no choice. By this time he was far down Meadow Land, and the bell for school to take 'up' tinkled faintly upon his ear. He sobbed, now, to think he should never, never hear that old familiar sound any more—it was very hard, but it was forced on him ; since he was driven out into the cold world, he must submit—but he forgave them. Then the sobs came thick and fast.

Just at this point he met his soul's sworn comrade, Joe Harper—hard-eyed, and with evidently a great and dismal purpose in his heart. Plainly here were 'two souls with but a single thought.' Tom, wiping his eyes with his sleeve, began to blubber out something about

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a resolution to escape from hard usage and lack of sympathy at home by roaming abroad into the great world, never to return; and ended by hoping that Joe would not forget him.

But it transpired that this was a request which Joe had just been going to make to Tom, and had come to hunt him up for that purpose. His mother had whipped him for drinking some cream which he had never tasted and knew nothing about; it was plain that she was tired of him and wished him to go; if she felt that way, there was nothing for him to do but to succumb; he hoped she would be happy, and never regret having driven her poor boy out into the unfeeling world to suffer and die.

As the two boys walked sorrowing along, they made a new compact to stand by each other and be brothers, and never separate till death relieved them of their troubles. Then they began to lay their plans. Joe was for being a hermit, and living on crusts in a remote cave, and dying, sometime, of cold, and want, and grief; but after listening to Tom, he conceded that there were some conspicuous advantages about a life of crime, and so he consented to be a pirate.

Three miles below St. Petersburg, at a point where the Mississippi river was a trifle over a mile wide, there was a long, narrow, wooded island, with a shallow bar at the head of it, and this offered well as a rendezvous. It was not inhabited; it lay far over towards the farther shore, abreast a dense and almost wholly unpeopled forest. So Jackson's Island was chosen. Who were to be the subjects of their piracies was a matter that did not occur to them. Then they hunted up Huckleberry Finn, and he joined them promptly, for all careers were one to him; he was indifferent. They presently separated, to meet at a lonely spot on the river bank two

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miles above the village, at the favourite hour, which was midnight. There was a small log raft there which they meant to capture. Each would bring hooks and lines, and such provisions as he could steal in the most dark and mysterious way—as became outlaws ; and before the afternoon was done, they had all managed to enjoy the sweet glory of spreading the fact that pretty soon the town would ‘hear something.’ All who got this vague hint were cautioned to ‘be mum and wait.’

About midnight Tom arrived with a boiled ham and a few trifles, and stopped in a dense undergrowth on a small bluff overlooking the meeting-place. It was starlight, and very still. The mighty river lay like an ocean at rest. Tom listened a moment, but no sound disturbed the quiet. Then he gave a low, distinct whistle. It was answered from under the bluff. Tom whistled twice more ; these signals were answered in the same way.

Then a guarded voice said :

‘Who goes there ?’

‘Tom Sawyer, the Black Avenger of the Spanish Main. Name your names.’

‘Huck Finn the Red-handed, and Joe Harper the Terror of the Seas.’ Tom had furnished these titles from his favourite literature.

‘’Tis well. Give the countersign.’

Two hoarse whispers delivered the same awful word simultaneously to the brooding night :

‘BLOOD !’

Then Tom tumbled his ham over the bluff and let himself down after it, tearing both skin and clothes to some extent in the effort. There was an easy, comfortable path along the shore under the bluff, but it lacked the advantages of difficulty and danger so valued by a pirate.

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The Terror of the Seas had brought a side of bacon, and had about worn himself out with getting it there. Finn the Red-handed had stolen a skillet, and a quantity of half-cured leaf tobacco, and had also brought a few corn-cobs to make pipes with. But none of the pirates smoked or 'chewed' but himself. The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main said it would never do to start without some fire. That was a wise thought; matches were hardly known there in that day. They saw a fire smouldering upon a great raft a hundred yards above, and they went stealthily thither and helped themselves to a chunk. They made an imposing adventure of it, saying 'hist' every now and then and suddenly halting with finger on lip; moving with hands on imaginary dagger-hilts; and giving orders in dismal whispers that if 'the foe' stirred to 'let him have it to the hilt,' because 'dead men tell no tales.' They knew well enough that the raftmen were all down at the village laying in stores or having a spree, but still that was no excuse for their conducting this thing in an unpiratical way.

They shoved off presently, Tom in command, Huck at the after oar and Joe at the forward. Tom stood amidships, gloomy-browed and with folded arms, and gave his orders in a low, stern whisper.

'Luff, and bring her to the wind!'

'Aye, aye, sir!'

'Steady, steady-y-y-y!'

'Steady it is, sir!'

'Let her go off a point!'

'Point it is, sir!'

As the boys steadily and monotonously drove the raft toward mid-stream, it was no doubt understood that these orders were given only for 'style,' and were not intended to mean anything in particular.

Tom, Huck, and Joe

‘What sail’s she carrying?’

‘Courses, tops’ls, and flying-jib, sir!’

‘Send the r’yals up! Lay out aloft there, half a dozen of ye, foretomast-stuns’l! Lively, now!’

‘Aye, aye, sir!’

‘Shake out that mainto-galans’l! Sheets and braces! *Now*, my hearties!’

‘Aye, aye, sir!’

‘Hellum-a-lee—hard a-port! Stand by to meet her when she comes! Port, port! *Now*, men! With a will! Stead-y-y!’

‘Steady it is, sir!’

The raft drew beyond the middle of the river; the boys pointed her head right and then lay on their oars. The river was not high, so there was not more than a two or three mile current. Hardly a word was said during the next three-quarters of an hour. Now the raft was passing before the distant town. Two or three glimmering lights showed where it lay, peacefully sleeping, beyond the vague vast sweep of star-gemmed water, unconscious of the tremendous event that was happening. The Black Avenger stood still with folded arms, ‘looking his last’ upon the scene of his former joys and his later sufferings, and wishing ‘she’ could see him now, abroad on the wild sea, facing peril and death with dauntless heart, going to his doom with a grim smile on his lips. It was but a small strain on his imagination to remove Jackson’s Island beyond eye-shot of the village, and so he ‘looked his last’ with a broken and satisfied heart. The other pirates were looking their last, too; and they all looked so long that they came near letting the current drift them out of the range of the island. But they discovered the danger in time, and made shift to avert it. About two o’clock in the morning the raft grounded

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on the bar two hundred yards above the head of the island, and they waded back and forth until they had landed their freight. Part of the little raft's belongings consisted of an old sail, and this they spread over a nook in the bushes for a tent to shelter their provisions; but they themselves would sleep in the open air in good weather, as became outlaws.

They built a fire against the side of a great log twenty or thirty steps within the sombre depths of the forest, and then cooked some bacon in the frying-pan for supper, and used up half of the corn 'pone' stock they had brought. It seemed glorious sport to be feasting in that wild free way in the virgin forest of an unexplored and uninhabited island, far from the haunts of men, and they said they would never return to civilization. The climbing fire lit up their faces and threw its ruddy glare upon the pillared tree-trunks of their forest temple, and upon the varnished foliage and festooning vines. When the last crisp slice of bacon was gone, and the last allowance of corn pone devoured, the boys stretched themselves out on the grass, filled with contentment. They could have found a cooler place, but they would not deny themselves such a romantic feature as the roasting camp fire.

'*Ain't* it jolly?' said Joe.

'It's *nuts*,' said Tom.

'What would the boys say if they could see us?'

'Say? Well, they'd just die to be here—hey, Hucky?'

'I reckon so,' said Huckleberry; 'anyways *I'm* suited. I don't want nothing better'n this. I don't ever get enough to eat gen'ally—and here they can't come and kick at a feller and bullyrag him so.'

'It's just the life for me,' said Tom. 'You don't have to get up, mornings, and you don't have to go to school, and wash, and all that blame foolishness.'

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‘ You see a pirate don’t have to do *anything*, Joe, when he’s ashore, but a hermit, *he* has to be praying considerable, and then he don’t have any fun, any way, all by himself that way.’

‘ Oh yes, that’s so,’ said Joe, ‘ but I hadn’t thought much about it, you know. I’d a good deal ruther be a pirate now that I’ve tried it.’

‘ You see,’ said Tom, ‘ people don’t go much on hermits, nowadays, like they used to in old times, but a pirate’s always respected. And a hermit’s got to sleep on the hardest place he can find, and put sackcloth and ashes on his head, and stand out in the rain, and——’

‘ What does he put sackcloth and ashes on his head for ?’ inquired Huck.

‘ I dunno. But they’ve *got* to do it. Hermits always do. You’d have to do that if you was a hermit.’

‘ Dern’d if I would,’ said Huck.

‘ Well, what would you do ?’

‘ I dunno. But I wouldn’t do that.’

‘ Why, Huck, you’d *have* to. How’d you get around it ?’

‘ Why I just wouldn’t stand it. I’d run away.’

‘ Run away ! Well, you *would* be a nice old slouch of a hermit. You’d be a disgrace.’

The Red-handed made no response, being better employed. He had finished gouging out a cob, and now he fitted a weed stem to it, loaded it with tobacco, and was pressing a coal to the charge and blowing a cloud of fragrant smoke ; he was in the full bloom of luxurious contentment. The other pirates envied him this majestic vice, and secretly resolved to acquire it shortly. Presently Huck said :

‘ What does pirates have to do ?’

Tom said :

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‘Oh, they just have a bully time—take ships, and burn them, and get the money and bury it in awful places in their island where there’s ghosts and things to watch it, and kill everybody in the ships—make ’em walk a plank.’

‘And they carry the women to the island,’ said Joe ; ‘they don’t kill the women.’

‘No,’ assented Tom, ‘they don’t kill the women—they’re too noble. And the women’s always beautiful, too.’

‘And don’t they wear the bulliest clothes ! Oh no ! All gold and silver and di’monds,’ said Joe with enthusiasm.

‘Who ?’ said Huck.

‘Why, the pirates.’

Huck scanned his own clothing forlornly.

‘I reckon I ain’t dressed fitten for a pirate,’ said he, with a regretful pathos in his voice ; ‘but I ain’t got none but these.’

But the other boys told him the fine clothes would come fast enough after they should have begun their adventures. They made him understand that his poor rags would do to begin with, though it was customary for wealthy pirates to start with a proper wardrobe.

Gradually their talk died out, and drowsiness began to steal upon the eyelids of the little waifs. The pipe dropped from the fingers of the Red-handed, and he slept the sleep of the conscience-free and the weary. The Terror of the Seas and the Black Avenger of the Spanish Main had more difficulty in getting to sleep. They said their prayers inwardly, and lying down, since there was nobody there with authority to make them kneel and recite aloud ; in truth they had a mind not to say them at all, but they were afraid to proceed to such lengths

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as that, lest they might call down a sudden and special thunder-bolt from heaven. Then at once they reached and hovered upon the imminent verge of sleep—but an intruder came now that would not ‘down.’ It was conscience. They began to feel a vague fear that they had been doing wrong to run away ; and next they thought of the stolen meat, and then the real torture came. They tried to argue it away by reminding conscience that they had purloined sweetmeats and apples scores of times ; but conscience was not to be appeased by such thin plausibilities. It seemed to them, in the end, that there was no getting around the stubborn fact that taking sweetmeats was only ‘hooking,’ while taking bacon and ham and such valuables was plain, simple stealing—and there was a command against that in the Bible. So they inwardly resolved that so long as they remained in the business, their piracies should not again be sullied with the crime of stealing. Then conscience granted a truce, and these curiously inconsistent pirates fell peacefully to sleep.

When Tom awoke in the morning, he wondered where he was. He sat up and rubbed his eyes and looked around ; then he comprehended. It was the cool grey dawn, and there was a delicious sense of repose and peace in the deep pervading calm and silence of the woods. Not a leaf stirred ; not a sound obtruded upon great Nature’s meditation. Beaded dew-drops stood upon the leaves and grasses. A white layer of ashes covered the fire, and a thin blue wreath of smoke rose straight into the air. Joe and Huck still slept. Now far away in the woods, a bird called ; another answered ; presently the hammering of a woodpecker was heard. Gradually the cool dim grey of the morning whitened, and as gradually sounds multiplied and life manifested

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itself. The marvel of Nature shaking off sleep and going to work unfolded itself to the musing boy. A little green worm came crawling over a dewy leaf, lifting two-thirds of his body into the air from time to time, 'sniffing around,' then proceeding again, for he was measuring, Tom said; and when the worm approached him of its own accord, he sat as still as a stone, with his hopes rising and falling by turns as the creature still came towards him or seemed inclined to go elsewhere; and when at last it considered a painful moment with its curved body in the air and then came decisively down upon Tom's leg and began a journey over him, his whole heart was glad—for that meant that he was going to have a new suit of clothes—without the shadow of a doubt, a gaudy piratical uniform. Now a procession of ants appeared, from nowhere in particular, and went about their labours; one struggled manfully by with a dead spider five times as big as itself in its arms, and lugged it straight up a tree trunk. A brown spotted lady-bug climbed the dizzy height of a grass-blade, and Tom bent down close to it and said:

'Lady-bug, lady-bug, fly away home :
Your house is on fire, your children's alone,'

and she took wing and went off to see about it—which did not surprise the boy, for he knew of old that this insect was credulous about conflagrations, and he had practised upon its simplicity more than once. A tumble-bug came next, heaving sturdily at its ball, and Tom touched the creature, to see it shut its legs against its body and pretend to be dead. The birds were fairly rioting by this time. A cat-bird, the northern mocker, lit in a tree over Tom's head, and trilled out her imitations of her neighbours in a rapture of enjoyment; then

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a shrill jay swept down, a flash of blue flame, and stopped on a twig almost within the boy's reach, cocked his head to one side and eyed the strangers with a consuming curiosity ; a grey squirrel and a big fellow of the ' fox ' kind came scurrying along, sitting up at intervals to inspect and chatter at the boys, for the wild things had probably never seen a human being before, and scarcely knew whether to be afraid or not. All Nature was wide awake and stirring now ; long lances of sunlight pierced down through the dense foliage far and near, and a few butterflies came fluttering upon the scene.

Tom stirred up the other pirates, and they all clattered away with a shout, and in a minute or two were stripped and chasing after and tumbling over each other in the shallow limpid water of the white sand-bar. They felt no longing for the little village sleeping in the distance beyond the majestic waste of water. A vagrant current or a slight rise in the river had carried off their raft, but this only gratified them, since its going was something like burning the bridge between them and civilization.

They came back to camp wonderfully refreshed, glad-hearted, and ravenous ; and they soon had the camp-fire blazing up again. Huck found a spring of clear cold water close by, and the boys made cups of broad oak or hickory leaves, and felt that water, sweetened with such a wild-wood charm as that, would be a good enough substitute for coffee. While Joe was slicing bacon for breakfast, Tom and Huck asked him to hold on a minute ; they stepped to a promising nook in the river bank and threw in their lines ; almost immediately they had reward. Joe had not had time to get impatient before they were back again with some handsome bass, a couple of sun-perch, and a small catfish—provision enough for quite a family. They fried the fish with the bacon and were

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astonished ; for no fish had ever seemed so delicious before. They did not know that the quicker a fresh-water fish is on the fire after he is caught the better he is ; and they reflected little upon what a sauce open-air sleeping, open-air exercise, bathing, and a large ingredient of hunger make, too.

They lay round in the shade after breakfast, while Huck had a smoke, and then went off through the woods on an exploring expedition. They tramped gaily along, over decaying logs, through tangled underbrush, among solemn monarchs of the forest, hung from their crowns to the ground with a drooping regalia of grape-vines. Now and then they came upon snug nooks carpeted with grass and jewelled with flowers.

They found plenty of things to be delighted with, but nothing to be astonished at. They discovered that the island was about three miles long and a quarter of a mile wide, and that the shore it lay closest to was only separated from it by a narrow channel hardly two hundred yards wide. They took a swim about every hour, so it was close upon the middle of the afternoon when they got back to camp. They were too hungry to stop to fish, but they fared sumptuously upon cold ham, and then threw themselves down in the shade to talk. But the talk soon began to drag, and then died. The stillness, the solemnity, that brooded in the woods, and the sense of loneliness, began to tell upon the spirits of the boys. They fell to thinking. A sort of undefined longing crept upon them. This took dim shape presently—it was budding home-sickness. Even Finn the Red-handed was dreaming of his door-steps and empty hogsheads. But they were all ashamed of their weakness, and none was brave enough to speak his thought.

For some time, now, the boys had been dully con-

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scious of a peculiar sound in the distance, just as one sometimes is of the ticking of a clock which he takes no distinct note of. But now this mysterious sound became more pronounced, and forced a recognition. The boys started, glanced at each other, and then each assumed a listening attitude. There was a long silence, profound and unbroken ; then a deep, sullen boom came floating down out of the distance.

‘What is it ?’ exclaimed Joe, under his breath.

‘I wonder,’ said Tom in a whisper.

‘’Tain’t thunder,’ said Huckleberry, in an awed tone, ‘becuz thunder——’

‘Hark !’ said Tom ; ‘listen—don’t talk.’

They waited a time that seemed an age, and then the same muffled boom troubled the solemn hush.

‘Let’s go and see.’

They sprang to their feet and hurried to the shore towards the town. They parted the bushes on the bank and peered out over the water. The little steam ferry-boat was about a mile below the village, drifting with the current. Her broad deck seemed crowded with people. There were a great many skiffs rowing about or floating with the stream in the neighbourhood of the ferry-boat, but the boys could not determine what the men in them were doing. Presently a great jet of white smoke burst from the ferry-boat’s side, and as it expanded and rose in a lazy cloud, that same dull throb of sound was borne to the listeners again.

‘I know now !’ exclaimed Tom ; ‘somebody’s drowned !’

‘That’s it,’ said Huck ; ‘they done that last summer when Bill Turner got drowned ; they shoot a cannon over the water, and that makes him come up to the top. Yes, and they take loaves of bread and put quicksilver

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in 'em and set 'em afloat, and wherever there's anybody that's drowned, they'll float right there and stop.'

'Yes, I've heard about that,' said Joe. 'I wonder what makes the bread do that?'

'Oh, it ain't the bread so much,' said Tom; 'I reckon it's mostly what they *say* over it before they start it out.'

'But they don't say anything over it,' said Huck. 'I've seen them, and they don't.'

'Well, that's funny,' said Tom. 'But maybe they say it to themselves. Of *course* they do. Anybody might know that.'

The other boys agreed that there was reason in what Tom said, because an ignorant lump of bread, uninstructed by an incantation, could not be expected to act very intelligently when sent upon an errand of such gravity.

'By jings, I wish I was over there now,' said Joe.

'I do too,' said Huck. 'I'd give heaps to know who it is.'

The boys still listened and watched. Presently a revealing thought flashed through Tom's mind, and he exclaimed:

'Boys, I know who's drowned; it's us!'

They felt like heroes in an instant. Here was a gorgeous triumph; they were missed; they were mourned; hearts were breaking on their account; tears were being shed; accusing memories of unkindnesses to these poor lost lads were rising up, and unavailing regrets and remorse were being indulged; and best of all, the departed were the talk of the whole town, and the envy of all the boys, as far as this dazzling notoriety was concerned. This was fine. It was worth while to be a pirate, after all.

As twilight drew on, the ferry-boat went back to her

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accustomed business and the skiffs disappeared. The pirates returned to camp. They were jubilant with vanity over their new grandeur and the illustrious trouble they were making. They caught fish, cooked supper, and ate it, and then fell to guessing at what the village was thinking and saying about them ; and the pictures they drew of the public distress on their account were gratifying to look upon from their point of view. But when the shadows of night closed them in, they gradually ceased to talk, and sat gazing into the fire, with their minds evidently wandering elsewhere. The excitement was gone now, and Tom and Joe could not keep back thoughts of certain persons at home who were not enjoying this fine frolic as much as they were. Misgivings came ; they grew troubled and unhappy ; a sigh or two escaped unawares. By-and-by Joe timidly ventured upon a roundabout 'feeler' as to how the others might look upon a return to civilization—not right now, but——

Tom withered him with derision ! Huck, being uncommitted as yet, joined in with Tom, and the waverer quickly 'explained,' and was glad to get out of the scrape with as little taint of chicken-hearted home-sickness clinging to his garments as he could. Mutiny was effectually laid to rest for the moment.

As the night deepened, Huck began to nod, and presently to snore ; Joe followed next. Tom lay upon his elbow motionless for some time, watching the two intently. At last he got up cautiously on his knees, and went searching among the grass and the flickering reflections flung by the camp-fire. He picked up and inspected several large semi-cylinders of the thin white bark of a sycamore, and finally chose two which seemed to suit him. Then he knelt by the fire and painfully wrote something upon each of these with his 'red keel' ; one

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he rolled up and put in his jacket-pocket, and the other he put in Joe's hat and removed it to a little distance from the owner. And he also put into the hat certain schoolboy treasures of almost inestimable value, among them a lump of chalk, an indiarubber ball, three fish-hooks, and one of that kind of marbles known as a 'sure 'nough crystal.' Then he tip-toed his way cautiously among the trees till he felt that he was out of hearing, and straightway broke into a keen run in the direction of the sand-bar.

[Tom's project was to steal home, hide himself, and hear what the village was saying about them. This he did. He hid under the bed, and heard his aunt's and Joe's mother's grief over the death (as they supposed) of their boys. This made Tom very miserable, but the sudden thought that it would be fun to return to the village while the memorial service for them was being held kept him from revealing himself, and he crept away unperceived and returned to Huck and Joe.]

All day they played on the island, and tried to smoke, and were very sick; and at night a thunderstorm came and drenched their camp and clothes, and the next day they played at being naked savages.

Then came Sunday, when Tom's great plan was to be put into action.]

When the Sunday-school hour was finished the next morning, the bell began to toll, instead of ringing in the usual way. It was a very still Sabbath, and the mournful sound seemed in keeping with the musing hush that lay upon nature. The villagers began to gather, loitering a moment in the vestibule to converse in whispers about the sad event. But there was no whispering in the house; only the funereal rustling of dresses, as the women gathered to their seats, disturbed the silence

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there. None could remember when the little church had been so full before. There was finally a waiting pause, an expectant dumbness, and then Aunt Polly entered, followed by Sid and Mary, and then by the Harper family, all in deep black, and the whole congregation, the old minister as well, rose reverently and stood, until the mourners were seated in the front pew. There was another communing silence, broken at intervals by muffled sobs, and then the minister spread his hands abroad and prayed. A moving hymn was sung, and the text followed : ' I am the resurrection and the life.'

As the service proceeded, the clergyman drew such pictures of the graces, the winning ways, and the rare promise of the lost lads, that every soul there, thinking he recognized these pictures, felt a pang in remembering that he had persistently blinded himself to them always before, and had as persistently seen only faults and flaws in the poor boys. The minister related many a touching incident in the lives of the departed, too, which illustrated their sweet, generous natures, and the people could easily see, now, how noble and beautiful those episodes were, and remembered with grief that at the time they occurred they had seemed rank rascalities, well deserving of the cowhide. The congregation became more and more moved as the pathetic tale went on, till at last the whole company broke down and joined the weeping mourners in a chorus of anguished sobs, the preacher himself giving way to his feelings, and crying in the pulpit.

There was a rustle in the gallery which nobody noticed ; a moment later the church door creaked ; the minister raised his streaming eyes above his handkerchief, and stood transfixed ! First one and then another pair of eyes followed the minister's, and then, almost with one



The three dead boys came
marching up the aisle -

Tom, Huck, and Joe

impulse, the congregation rose and stared while the three dead boys came marching up the aisle, Tom in the lead, Joe next, and Huck, a ruin of drooping rags, sneaking sheepishly in the rear. They had been hid in the unused gallery, listening to their own funeral sermon !

Aunt Polly, Mary, and the Harpers threw themselves upon their restored ones, smothered them with kisses and poured out thanksgivings, while poor Huck stood abashed and uncomfortable, not knowing exactly what to do or where to hide from so many unwelcoming eyes. He wavered, and started to slink away, but Tom seized him and said :

‘ Aunt Polly, it ain’t fair. Somebody’s got to be glad to see Huck.’

‘ And so they shall ! I’m glad to see him, poor motherless thing !’ And the glowing attentions Aunt Polly lavished upon him were the one thing capable of making him more uncomfortable than he was before.

Suddenly the minister shouted at the top of his voice :

‘ “ Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow ”—SING !—and put your hearts in it !’

And they did. Old Hundred swelled up with a triumphant burst, and while it shook the rafters Tom Sawyer the Pirate looked around upon the envying juveniles about him, and confessed in his heart that this was the proudest moment of his life.

As the ‘ sold ’ congregation trooped out, they said they would almost be willing to be made ridiculous again to hear Old Hundred sung like that once more.

Baby Sylvester



It was at a little mining-camp in the California Sierras that he first dawned upon me in all his grotesque sweetness.

I had arrived early in the morning, but not in time to intercept the friend who was the object of my visit. He had gone 'prospecting'—so they told me on the river—and would not probably return

until late in the afternoon. They could not say what direction he had taken ; they could not suggest that I would be likely to find him if I followed. But it was the general opinion that I had better wait.

I looked around me. I was standing upon the bank of the river ; and apparently the only other human beings in the world were my interlocutors, who were even then just disappearing from my horizon, down the steep bank, towards the river's dry bed. I approached the edge of the bank.

Where could I wait ?

Oh ! anywhere—down with them on the river-bar, where they were working, if I liked. Or I could make myself at home in any of those cabins that I found lying round loose. Or perhaps it would be cooler and pleasanter

Baby Sylvester

for me in my friend's cabin on the hill. Did I see those three large sugar-pines, and a little to the right, a canvas roof and chimney, over the bushes? Well, that was my friend's—that was Dick Sylvester's cabin. I could stake my horse in that little hollow, and just hang round there till he came. I would find some books in the shanty. I could amuse myself with them; or I could play with the baby.

Do what?

But they had already gone. I leaned over the bank and called after their vanishing figures—

‘What did you say I could do?’

The answer floated slowly up on the hot, sluggish air—

‘Pla-a-y with the ba-by.’

The lazy echoes took it up, and tossed it languidly from hill to hill, until Bald Mountain opposite made some incoherent remark about the baby; and then all was still.

I must have been mistaken. My friend was not a man of family; there was not a woman within forty miles of the river camp; he never was so passionately devoted to children as to import a luxury so expensive. I must have been mistaken.

I turned my horse's head toward the hill. As we slowly climbed the narrow trail, the little settlement might have been some exhumed Pompeiian suburb, so deserted and silent were its habitations. The open doors plainly disclosed each rudely furnished interior—the rough pine table, with the scant equipage of the morning meal still standing; the wooden bunk with its tumbled and dishevelled blankets. A golden lizard, the very genius of desolate stillness, had stopped breathless upon the threshold of one cabin; a squirrel peeped impudently into the window of another; a woodpecker, with the general flavour of undertaking which distinguishes that bird, withheld his sepulchral hammer from the coffin-lid

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of the roof on which he was professionally engaged, as we passed. For a moment I half regretted that I had not accepted the invitation to the river-bed ; but the next moment a breeze swept up along the dark cañon, and the waiting files of the pines beyond bent toward me in salutation. I think my horse understood, as well as myself, that it was the cabins that made the solitude human, and therefore unbearable ; for he quickened his pace, and with a gentle trot brought me to the edge of the wood, and the three pines that stood like vedettes before the Sylvester outpost.

Unsaddling my horse in the little hollow, I unslung the long *viata* from the saddle-bow, and, tethering him to a young sapling, turned toward the cabin. But I had gone only a few steps, when I heard a quick trot behind me, and poor Pomposo, with every fibre tingling with fear, was at my heels. I looked hurriedly around. The breeze had died away, and only an occasional breath from the deep-chested woods, more like a long sigh than any articulate sound, or the dry singing of a cicala in the heated cañon, were to be heard. I examined the ground carefully for rattlesnakes, but in vain. Yet here was Pomposo, shivering from his arched neck to his sensitive haunches, his very flanks pulsating with terror. I soothed him as well as I could, and then walked to the edge of the wood, and peered into the dark recesses. The bright flash of a bird's wing, or the quick dart of a squirrel, was all I saw. I confess it was with something of superstitious expectation that I again turned towards the cabin. A fairy child, attended by Titania and her train, lying in an expensive cradle, would not have surprised me : a Sleeping Beauty, whose awakening would have re-peopled these solitudes with life and energy, I am afraid I began to confidently look for, and would have kissed without hesitation.

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But I found none of these. Here was the evidence of my friend's taste and refinement, in the hearth swept scrupulously clean, in the picturesque arrangement of the fur skins that covered the floor and furniture, and the striped *serápe** lying on the wooden couch. Here were the walls fancifully papered with illustrations from the *London News*; here was the woodcut portrait of Mr. Emerson over the chimney, quaintly framed with blue-jays' wings; here were his few favourite books on the swinging-shelf; and here, lying upon the couch, the latest copy of *Punch*. Dear Dick! The flour-sack was sometimes empty; but the gentle satirist seldom missed his weekly visit.

I threw myself on the couch and tried to read. But I soon exhausted my interest in my friend's library, and lay there staring through the open door on the green hill-side beyond. The breeze again sprang up; and a delicious coolness, mixed with the rare incense of the woods, stole through the cabin. The slumbrous droning of humble-bees outside the canvas roof, the faint cawing of rooks on the opposite mountain, and the fatigue of my morning ride, began to droop my eyelids. I pulled the *scrápe* over me, as a precaution against the freshening mountain breeze, and in a few moments was asleep.

I do not remember how long I slept. I must have been conscious, however, during my slumber, of my inability to keep myself covered by the *serápe*, for I awoke once or twice clutching it with a despairing hand as it was disappearing over the foot of the couch. Then I became suddenly aroused to the fact that my efforts to retain it were resisted by some equally persistent force, and, letting it go, I was horrified at seeing it swiftly drawn under the couch. At this point I sat up, completely awake, for

* A fine Mexican blanket, used as an outer garment for riding.

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immediately after what seemed to be an exaggerated muff began to emerge from under the couch. Presently it appeared fully, dragging the *serâpe* after it. There was no mistaking it now : it was a baby-bear—a mere suckling, it was true, a helpless roll of fat and fur, but unmistakably a grizzly cub !

I cannot recall anything more irresistibly ludicrous than its aspect as it slowly raised its small, wondering eyes to mine. It was so much taller on its haunches than its shoulders, its forelegs were so disproportionately small, that, in walking, its hind feet invariably took precedence. It was perpetually pitching forward over its pointed, in-offensive nose, and recovering itself always, after these involuntary somersaults, with the gravest astonishment. To add to its preposterous appearance, one of its hind feet was adorned by a shoe of Sylvester's, into which it had accidentally and inextricably stepped. As this somewhat impeded its first impulse to fly, it turned to me ; and then, possibly recognizing in the stranger the same species as its master, it paused. Presently it slowly raised itself on its hind legs, and vaguely and deprecatingly waved a baby-paw, fringed with little hooks of steel. I took the paw and shook it gravely. From that moment we were friends. The little affair of the *serâpe* was forgotten.

Nevertheless, I was wise enough to cement our friendship by an act of delicate courtesy. Following the direction of his eyes, I had no difficulty in finding on a shelf near the ridge-hole the sugar-box and the square lumps of white sugar that even the poorest miner is never without. While he was eating them, I had time to examine him more closely. His body was a silky, dark, but exquisitely modulated grey, deepening to black in his paws and muzzle. His fur was excessively long, thick, and soft as eider-down ; the cushions of flesh beneath perfectly

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infantile in their texture and contour. He was so very young that the palms of his half-human feet were still tender as a baby's. Except for the bright blue, steely hooks, half sheathed in his little toes, there was not a single harsh outline or detail in his plump figure. He was as free from angles as one of Leda's offspring. Your caressing hand sank away in his fur with dreamy languor. To look at him long was an intoxication of the senses ; to pat him was a wild delirium ; to embrace him, an utter demoralization of the intellectual faculties.

When he had finished the sugar, he rolled out of the door with a half-diffident, half-inviting look in his eyes, as if he expected me to follow. I did so ; but the sniffing and snorting of the keen-scented Pomposo in the hollow not only revealed the cause of his former terror, but decided me to take another direction. After a moment's hesitation, he concluded to go with me, although I am satisfied, from a certain impish look in his eye, that he fully understood and rather enjoyed the fright of Pomposo. As he rolled along at my side, with a gait not unlike a drunken sailor, I discovered that his long hair concealed a leather collar around his neck, which bore for its legend the single word, 'Baby !' I recalled the mysterious suggestion of the two miners. This, then, was the 'baby' with whom I was to 'play.'

How we 'played' ; how Baby allowed me to roll him down-hill, crawling and puffing up again each time with perfect good-humour ; how he climbed a young sapling after my Panama hat, which I had 'shied' into one of the topmost branches ; how, after getting it, he refused to descend until it suited his pleasure ; how, when he did come down, he persisted in walking about on three legs, carrying my hat, a crushed and shapeless mass, clasped to his breast with the remaining one ; how I missed him

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at last, and finally discovered him seated on a table in one of the tenantless cabins, with a bottle of syrup between his paws, vainly endeavouring to extract its contents—these and other details of that eventful day I shall not weary the reader with now. Enough that, when Dick Sylvester returned, I was pretty well fagged out, and the baby was rolled up, an immense bolster, at the foot of the couch, asleep.

Sylvester's first words after our greeting were. 'Isn't he delicious?'

'Perfectly. Where did you get him?'

'Lying under his dead mother, five miles from here,' said Dick, lighting his pipe. 'Knocked her over at fifty yards: perfectly clean shot; never moved afterwards. Baby crawled out, scared, but unhurt. She must have been carrying him in the mouth, and dropped him when she faced me, for he wasn't more than three days old, and not steady on his pins. He takes the only milk that comes to the settlement, brought up by Adams's Express at seven o'clock every morning. They say he looks like me. Do you think so?' asked Dick, with perfect gravity, stroking his hay-coloured moustaches, and evidently assuming his best expression.

I took leave of the baby early the next morning in Sylvester's cabin, and, out of respect to Pomposo's feelings, rode by without any postscript of expression. But the night before I had made Sylvester solemnly swear that, in the event of any separation between himself and Baby, it should revert to me.

'At the same time,' he had added, 'it's only fair to say that I don't think of dying just yet, old fellow; and I don't know of anything else that would part the cub and me.'

Two months after this conversation, as I was turning over the morning's mail at my office in San Francisco, I

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noticed a letter bearing Sylvester's familiar hand. But it was post-marked 'Stockton,' and I opened it with some anxiety at once. Its contents were as follows :

O FRANK !

Don't you remember what we agreed upon anent the baby ? Well, consider me as dead for the next six months, or gone where cubs can't follow me—East. I know you love the baby ; but do you think, dear boy—now, really, do you think you *could* be a father to it ? Consider this well. You are young, thoughtless, well-meaning enough ; but dare you take upon yourself the functions of guide, genius, or guardian to one so young and guileless ? Could you be the Mentor to this Telemachus ? Think of the temptations of a metropolis. Look at the question well, and let me know speedily, for I've got him as far as this place, and he's kicking up an awful row in the hotel yard, and rattling his chain like a maniac. Let me know by telegraph at once.

SYLVESTER.

P.S.—Of course he's grown a little, and doesn't take things always as quietly as he did. He dropped rather heavily on two of Watson's 'pups' last week, and snatched old Watson himself bald-headed for interfering. You remember Watson ? For an intelligent nian, he knows very little of Californian fauna. How are you fixed for bears on Montgomery Street—I mean in regard to corrals and things ?

S.

P.P.S.—He's got some new tricks. The boys have been teaching him to put up his hand with them. He slings an ugly left.

S.

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I am afraid that my desire to possess myself of Baby overcame all other considerations, and I telegraphed an affirmative at once to Sylvester. When I reached my lodgings late that afternoon, my landlady was awaiting me with a telegram. It was two lines from Sylvester—

All right. Baby goes down on night boat. Be a father to him.

S.

It was due, then, at one o'clock that night. For a moment I was staggered at my own precipitation. I had as yet made no preparations, had said nothing to my landlady about her new guest. I expected to arrange everything in time ; and now, through Sylvester's indecent haste, that time had been shortened twelve hours.

Something, however, must be done at once. I turned to Mrs. Brown. I had great reliance in her maternal instincts : I had that still greater reliance common to our sex in the general tender-heartedness of pretty women. But I confess I was alarmed. Yet with a feeble smile I tried to introduce the subject with classical ease and lightness. I even said, ' If Shakespeare's Athenian clown, Mrs. Brown, believed that a lion among ladies was a dreadful thing, what must——' But here I broke down, for Mrs. Brown, with the awful intuition of her sex, I saw at once was more occupied with my manner than my speech. So I tried a business *brusquerie*, and, placing the telegram in her hand, said hurriedly, ' We must do something about this at once. It's perfectly absurd ; but he will be here at one to-night. Beg thousand pardons ; but business prevented my speaking before '—and paused, out of breath and courage.

Mrs. Brown read the telegram gravely, lifted her pretty eyebrows, turned the paper over and looked on the other

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side, and then, in a remote and chilling voice, asked me if she understood me to say that the mother was coming also.

‘Oh dear, no!’ I exclaimed, with considerable relief. ‘The mother is dead, you know. Sylvester, that is my friend who sent this, shot her when the baby was only three days old.’ But the expression of Mrs. Brown’s face at this moment was so alarming that I saw that nothing but the fullest explanation would save me. Hastily, and I fear not very coherently, I told her all.

She relaxed sweetly. She said I had frightened her with my talk about lions. Indeed, I think my picture of poor Baby, albeit a trifle highly coloured, touched her motherly heart. She was even a little vexed at what she called Sylvester’s ‘hard-heartedness.’ Still, I was not without some apprehension. It was two months since I had seen him; and Sylvester’s vague allusion to his ‘slinging an ugly left’ pained me. I looked at sympathetic little Mrs. Brown; and the thought of Watson’s pups covered me with guilty confusion.

Mrs. Brown had agreed to sit up with me until he arrived. One o’clock came, but no Baby. Two o’clock, three o’clock, passed. It was almost four when there was a wild clatter of horses’ hoofs outside, and with a jerk a waggon stopped at the door. In an instant I had opened it, and confronted a stranger. Almost at the same moment the horses attempted to run away with the waggon.

The stranger’s appearance was, to say the least, disconcerting. His clothes were badly torn and frayed; his linen sack hung from his shoulders like a herald’s apron; one of his hands was bandaged; his face scratched; and there was no hat on his dishevelled head. To add to the general effect, he had evidently sought relief from

Baby Sylvester

his woes in drink, and he swayed from side to side as he clung to the door-handle, and, in a very thick voice, stated that he had 'suthin' for me outside. When he had finished, the horses made another plunge.

Mrs. Brown thought they must be frightened at something.

'Frightened!' laughed the stranger, with bitter irony. 'Oh no! Hossish ain't frightened! On'y ran away four timesh comin' here. Oh no! Nobody's frightened. Everythin's all ri'. Ain't it, Bill?' he said, addressing the driver. 'On'y been overboard twish; knocked down a hatchway once. Thash nothin'! On'y two men under doctor's han's at Stockton. Thash nothin'! Siz hunner dollarsh cover all damish.'

I was too much disheartened to reply, but moved toward the waggon. The stranger eyed me with an astonishment that almost sobered him.

'Do you reckon to tackle that animile yourself?' he asked, as he surveyed me from head to foot.

I did not speak, but with an appearance of boldness I was far from feeling, walked to the waggon, and called, 'Baby!'

'All ri'. Cash loose them straps, Bill, and stan' clear.'

The straps were cut loose, and Baby, the remorseless, the terrible, quietly tumbled to the ground, and, rolling to my side, rubbed his foolish head against me.

I think the astonishment of the two men was beyond any vocal expression. Without a word, the drunken stranger got into the waggon, and drove away.

And Baby! He had grown, it is true, a trifle larger, but he was thin, and bore the marks of evident ill-usage. His beautiful coat was matted and unkempt, and his claws, those bright steel hooks, had been ruthlessly pared to the quick. His eyes were furtive and restless, and the old

Baby Sylvester

expression of stupid good-humour had changed to one of intelligent distrust. His intercourse with mankind had evidently quickened his intellect, without broadening his moral nature.

I had great difficulty in keeping Mrs. Brown from smothering him in blankets, and ruining his digestion with the delicacies of her larder, but I at last got him completely rolled up in the corner of my room, and asleep. I lay awake some time later with plans for his future. I finally determined to take him to Oakland, where I had built a little cottage, and always spent my Sundays, the very next day. And in the midst of a rosy picture of domestic felicity I fell asleep.

When I awoke it was broad day. My eyes at once sought the corner where Baby had been lying, but he was gone. I sprang from the bed, looked under it, searched the closet, but in vain. The door was still locked, but there were marks of his blunted claws upon the sill of the window that I had forgotten to close. He had evidently escaped that way. But where? The window opened upon a balcony, to which the only other entrance was through the hall. He must be still in the house.

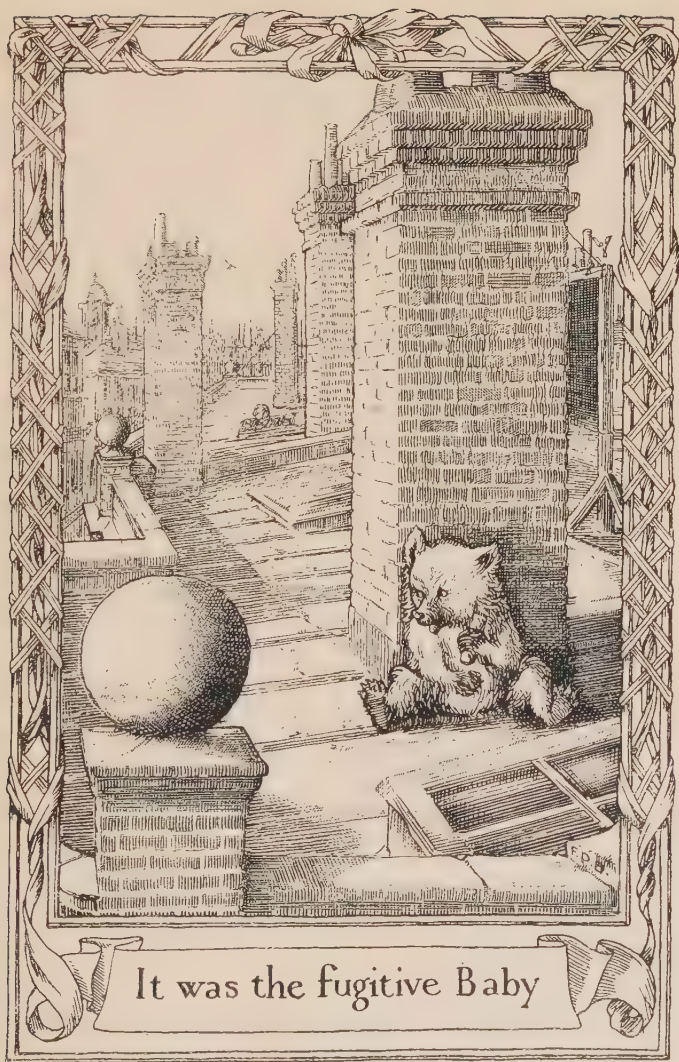
My hand was already upon the bell-rope, but I stayed it in time. If he had not made himself known, why should I disturb the house? I dressed myself hurriedly, and slipped into the hall. The first object that met my eyes was a boot lying upon the stairs. It bore the marks of Baby's teeth; and as I looked along the hall, I saw too plainly that the usual array of freshly-blackened boots and shoes before the lodgers' doors was not there. As I ascended the stairs I found another, but with the blacking carefully licked off. On the third floor were two or three more boots, slightly mouthed; but at this point Baby's taste for blacking had evidently palled. A little farther

Baby Sylvester

on was a ladder leading to an open scuttle. I mounted the ladder, and reached the flat roof that formed a continuous level over the row of houses to the corner of the street. Behind the chimney on the very last roof something was lurking. It was the fugitive Baby. He was covered with dust and dirt, and fragments of glass. But he was sitting on his hind legs, and was eating an enormous slab of peanut candy, with a look of mingled guilt and infinite satisfaction. He even, I fancied, slightly stroked his stomach with his disengaged forepaw as I approached. He knew that I was looking for him, and the expression of his eye said plainly, 'The past at least is secure.'

I hurried him, with the evidences of his guilt, back to the scuttle, and descended on tiptoe to the floor beneath. Providence favoured us : I met no one on the stairs ; and his own cushioned tread was inaudible. I think he was conscious of the dangers of detection, for he even forebore to breathe, or much less chew the last mouthful he had taken ; and he skulked at my side with the syrup dropping from his motionless jaws. I think he would have silently choked to death just then, for my sake ; and it was not until I had reached my room again, and threw myself panting on the sofa, that I saw how near strangulation he had been. He gulped once or twice apologetically, and then walked to the corner of his own accord, and rolled himself up like an immense sugar-plum, sweating remorse and treacle at every pore.

I locked him in when I went to breakfast, when I found Mrs. Brown's lodgers in a state of intense excitement over certain mysterious events of the night before, and the dreadful revelations of the morning. It appeared that burglars had entered the block from the scuttles ; that, being suddenly alarmed, they had quitted our house without committing any depredation, dropping even the boots



Baby Sylvester

they had collected in the halls ; but that a desperate attempt had been made to force the till in the confectioner's shop on the corner, and that the glass show-cases had been ruthlessly smashed. A courageous servant in No. 4 had seen a masked burglar, on his hands and knees, attempting to enter their scuttle, but on her shouting, ' Away wid yees ! ' he instantly fled.

I sat through this recital with cheeks that burned uncomfortably ; nor was I less embarrassed, on raising my eyes, to meet Mrs. Brown's fixed curiously and mischievously on mine. As soon as I could make my escape from the table, I did so, and, running rapidly upstairs, sought refuge from any possible inquiry in my own room. Baby was still asleep in the corner. It would not be safe to remove him until the lodgers had gone down town ; and I was revolving in my mind the expediency of keeping him until night veiled his obtrusive eccentricity from the public eye, when there came a cautious tap at my door. I opened it. Mrs. Brown slipped in quietly, closed the door softly, stood with her back against it and her hand on the knob, and beckoned me mysteriously towards her. Then she asked, in a low voice :

' Is hair-dye poisonous ? '

I was too confounded to speak.

' Oh, do ! you know what I mean,' she said impatiently. ' This stuff.' She produced suddenly from behind her a bottle with a Greek label so long as to run two or three times spirally around it from top to bottom. ' He says it isn't a dye : it's a vegetable preparation, for invigorating——'

' Who says ? ' I asked despairingly.

' Why, Mr. Parker, of course ! ' said Mrs. Brown severely, with the air of having repeated the name a great many times—' the old gentleman in the room above. The simple

Baby Sylvester

question I want to ask,' she continued, with the calm manner of one who had just convicted another of gross ambiguity of language, 'is only this : If some of this stuff were put in a saucer, and left carelessly on a table, and a child, or a baby, or a cat, or any young animal, should come in at the window and drink it up—a whole saucerful—because it had a sweet taste, would it be likely to hurt them ?'

I cast an anxious glance at Baby, sleeping peacefully in the corner, and a very grateful one at Mrs. Brown, and said I didn't think it would.

'Because,' said Mrs. Brown loftily, as she opened the door, 'I thought, if it was poisonous, remedies might be used in time. Because,' she added, suddenly abandoning her lofty manner, and wildly rushing to the corner with a frantic embrace of the unconscious Baby, 'because, if any nasty stuff should turn its booful hair a horrid green or a naughty pink, it would break its own muzzer's heart, it would !'

But, before I could assure Mrs. Brown of the inefficiency of hair-dye as an internal application, she had darted from the room.

That night, with the secrecy of defaulters, Baby and I decamped from Mrs. Brown's. Distrusting the too emotional nature of that noble animal the horse, I had recourse to a hand-cart, drawn by a stout Irishman, to convey my charge to the ferry. Even then Baby refused to go unless I walked by the cart, and at times rode in it.

'I wish,' said Mrs. Brown, as she stood by the door, wrapped in an immense shawl, and saw us depart, 'I wish it looked less solemn—less like a pauper's funeral.'

I must admit that, as I walked by the cart that night, I felt very much as if I were accompanying the remains of some humble friend to his last resting-place, and that,

Baby Sylvester

when I was obliged to ride in it, I never could entirely convince myself that I was not hopelessly overcome by liquor, or the victim of an accident, *en route* to the hospital. But at last we reached the ferry. On the boat, I think no one discovered Baby, except a drunken man who approached me to ask for a light for his cigar, but who suddenly dropped it, and fled in dismay to the gentlemen's cabin, where his incoherent ravings were luckily taken for the earlier indications of *delirium tremens*.

It was nearly midnight when I reached my little cottage on the outskirts of Oakland, and it was with a feeling of relief and security that I entered, locked the door, and turned him loose in the hall, satisfied that henceforth his depredations would be limited to my own property. He was very quiet that night, and after he had tried to mount the hat-rack, under the mistaken impression that it was intended for his own gymnastic exercise, and knocked all the hats off, he went peaceably to sleep on the rug.

In a week, with the exercise afforded him by the run of a large, carefully boarded enclosure, he recovered his health, strength, spirits, and much of his former beauty. His presence was unknown to my neighbours, although it was noticeable that horses invariably 'shied' in passing to the windward of my house, and that the baker and milkman had great difficulty in the delivery of their wares in the morning, and indulged in unseemly and unnecessary profanity in so doing.

At the end of the week I determined to invite a few friends to see the Baby, and to that purpose wrote a number of formal invitations. After descanting at some length on the great expense and danger attending his capture and training, I offered a programme of the performance of the 'Infant phenomenon of Sierran Solitudes,' drawn up into the highest professional profusion of allitera-

Baby Sylvester

tion and capital letters. A few extracts will give the reader some idea of his educational progress :

1. He will, rolled up in a Round Ball, roll down the Wood-Shed Rapidly, illustrating His manner of Escaping from His Enemy in His Native Wilds.
2. He will Ascend the Well-Pole, and remove from the Very Top a Hat, and as much of the Crown and Brim thereof as May be Permitted.
3. He will perform in a pantomime, descriptive of the Conduct of the Big Bear, The Middle-Sized Bear, and The Little Bear of the Popular Nursery Legend.
4. He will shake his chain Rapidly, showing his Manner of striking Dismay and Terror in the Breasts of Wanderers in Ursine Wildernesses.

The morning of the exhibition came, but an hour before the performance the wretched Baby was missing. The Chinese cook could not indicate his whereabouts. I searched the premises thoroughly, and then, in despair, took my hat, and hurried out into the narrow lane that led toward the open fields and the woods beyond. But I found no trace nor track of Baby Sylvester. I returned after an hour's fruitless search, to find my guests already assembled on the rear veranda. I briefly recounted my disappointment, my probable loss, and begged their assistance.

‘Why,’ said a Spanish friend, who prided himself on his accurate knowledge of English, to Barker, who seemed to be trying vainly to rise from his reclining position on the veranda, ‘why do you not disengage yourself from the veranda of our friend ? And why, in the name of Heaven, do you attach to yourself so much of this thing, and make to yourself such unnecessary contortion ? Ah,’ he continued, suddenly withdrawing one of his own feet from the

Baby Sylvester

veranda with an evident effort. 'I am myself attached ! Surely it is something here !'

It evidently was. My guests were all rising with difficulty. The floor of the veranda was covered with some glutinous substance. It was—syrup !

I saw it all in a flash. I ran to the barn. The keg of 'golden syrup,' purchased only the day before, lay empty upon the floor. There were sticky tracks all over the enclosure, but still no Baby.

'There's something moving the ground over there by that pile of dirt,' said Barker.

He was right. The earth was shaking in one corner of the enclosure like an earthquake. I approached cautiously. I saw, what I had not noticed, that the ground was thrown up ; and there, in the middle of an immense grave-like cavity, crouched Baby Sylvester, still digging, and slowly but surely sinking from sight in a mass of dust and clay.

What were his intentions ? Whether he was stung by remorse, and wished to hide himself from my reproachful eyes, or whether he was simply trying to dry his syrup-besmeared coat, I never shall know, for that day, alas ! was his last with me.

He was pumped upon for two hours, at the end of which time he still yielded a thin treacle. He was then taken, and carefully enwrapped in blankets, and locked up in the store-room. The next morning he was gone ! The lower portion of the window-sash and pane were both gone too. His successful experiments on the fragile texture of glass at the confectioner's on the first day of his entrance to civilization had not been lost upon him. His first essay at combining cause and effect ended in his escape.

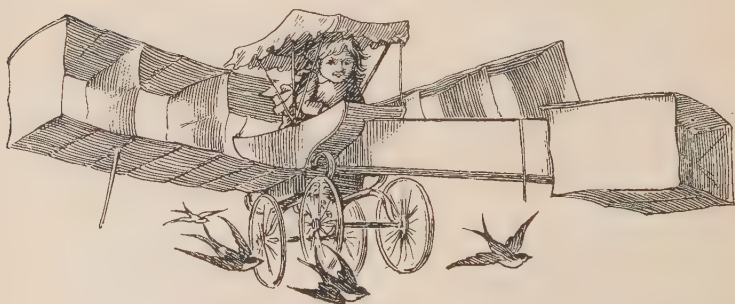
Where he went, where he hid, who captured him, if he did not succeed in reaching the foothills beyond Oakland, even the offer of a large reward, backed by the efforts of

Baby Sylvester

an intelligent police, could not discover. I never saw him again from that day until——

Did I see him? I was in a horse-car on the Sixth Avenue, a few days ago, when the horses suddenly became unmanageable, and left the track for the sidewalk, amid the oaths and execrations of the driver. Immediately in front of the car a crowd had gathered around two performing bears and a showman. One of the animals, thin, emaciated, and a mere wreck of his native strength, attracted my attention. I endeavoured to attract his. He turned a pair of bleared, sightless eyes in my direction: but there was no sign of recognition. I leaned from the car-window, and called softly, 'Baby!' But he did not heed. I closed the window. The car was just moving on, when he suddenly turned, and, either by accident or design, thrust a callous paw through the glass.

'It's worth a dollar and a half to put in a new pane,' said the conductor. 'If folks will play with bears——'



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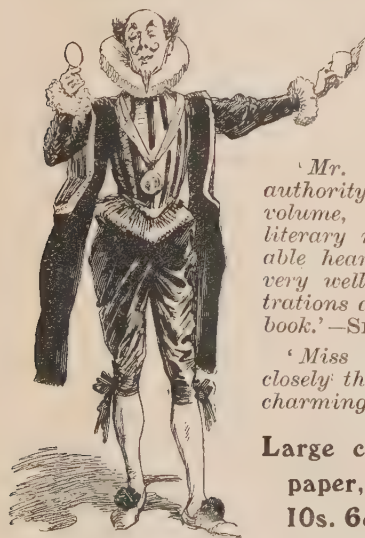
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